WAGES IN FOCUS

'I FREELY ADMIT THAT THE BEST OF MY FUN
I OWE IT TO HORSE AND HOUND' - *Whyte Melville*

EVERY WEEK
19 JANUARY 2023

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'I FREELY ADMIT THAT THE BEST OF MY FUN I OWE IT TO HORSE AND HOUND' - *Whyte Melville*

HORSE&HOUND

Motivation

HOW many riders have begrudged a bigger "name" beating them in competition, feeling this was on account of said fame? Anna Ross's (possibly not very popular) opinion (p14), is that if we're honest it probably wasn't because of who they are, but because they paid close attention to the details that allowed them to secure every possible mark from the judges. Halting square, carrying out transitions at markers – being more polished, even if to the bystander they didn't look to have the edge over a lesser known combination.

That's something I can embrace – the idea that it is in our gift to improve our chances in the arena against any competitor, rather than the fatalistic view that if a top rider is in the class you stand no chance. Some riders won't compete against certain names, or are annoyed by how they are classified as a rider, pitching them against tougher opposition. Believing that the result is not inevitable is the motivation we all need. Yes, we all stand a better chance in a lower grade or section, but we can improve our odds wherever we sit – and wouldn't success feel that much sweeter for it?

Equestrianism is unique in that all calibre of competitor can compete alongside each other. For some that will always feel like a blessing, for others a curse, depending on your outlook. It can depend on your trainer, too, with not all being created equal. One point I would add to Anna's warning about checking coaches' credentials is that not all riders that do have the accolade "international grand prix rider" want to teach – and not all have the ability to explain to another how to achieve greatness. Those who can, do – those who can explain it should also teach.

Sarah Jenkins
Editor-in-Chief

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COVER Champion cob Hortons Magnifico. Credit: Peter Nixon

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SCAN TO GET OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Pictures by Al Shira'aa International Horse Show and Wim Barelds

HORSE&HOUND
Magic of cobs
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Reach new heights

Get more of what you love on p38

STAY INSPIRED
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Industry must work smarter to deal with wage increases

The minimum wage will go up again this spring meaning working practices may need to change

Yard owners must ensure their prices reflect all costs

By ELEANOR JONES

THE equestrian industry has to "work smarter", do its calculations and know its value to remain viable with forthcoming national minimum wage (NMW) increases.

The legal minimum that can be paid to employees is to increase again on 1 April, and British Grooms Association (BGA) and Equestrian Employers Association (EEA) founder Lucy Katan said the implications are concerning.

The rate is increasing from £6.83 to £7.49 for 18- to 20-year-olds, from £9.18 to £10.18 for those aged 21 and 22, and from £9.50 to £10.42 for anyone aged 23 and over.

For a 23-year-old groom working 60 hours per week, this is an increase of £2,870 per year. Ms Katan also points out that there may be many grooms who will go up an age bracket this year; a 20-year-old currently earning £7.49, and on the same hours, will legally require an £8,392 annual pay rise when they turn 21.

"I'm really worried about this, and I don't say that lightly," Ms Katan told *H&H*. "I don't know how some yards will afford it."

Ms Katan added that awareness of the legal right to the NMW in the workforce is "the highest it's ever been", and that employers who under-pay staff face having to pay 200% of arrears – and the Government can investigate the past six years.

She said employers must protect themselves by logging all staff working hours, and she recommends paying monthly rather than weekly so overtime can be paid, or time off in lieu taken, within a pay period.

But her main message is that some yards and employers have to change their mindset.

"We have to change the way the industry operates," she said. "We've got to modernise and lose the old-fashioned view that the yard has to be perfect at 9am. Less hours will reduce the wage bill. That may not hugely benefit the groom who doesn't get a big rise, but the reality could be otherwise that he or she doesn't have a job.

"Even starting an hour later can add up to a big saving. As long as horse welfare isn't affected – but it won't be if they're mucked out a bit later, or the yard isn't swept to perfection. You have to modernise and professionalise and run a business."

> *"We have to change the way the industry operates"*
> LUCY KATAN

Coach, judge and rider Ali Dane also runs a livery yard, and has joined the EEA and BGA boards. She told *H&H* that although this is a big increase, employers should be aware that the NMW goes up every year, and expect a significant rise this year.

"It was inevitable the NMW would go up significantly to reflect the cost of living," she said.

"But on the other hand, clients, whether owners of competition horses or livery clients, need to better understand the cost of keeping horses."

She said, as *H&H* has previously reported, that many owners do not know how much it costs to keep horses, and that sometimes neither do those running livery yards. The latter need to set a price that covers all costs including staffing – and makes a profit – while the former need to pay it.

"Yard owners often don't want to pass on cost increases," she said. "They feel bad about charging the correct amount, which is crazy. In what other industry do businesses feel guilty about making a profit? But I feel many yard owners almost don't really want to, which is bonkers."

Ms Dane said she knows what everything costs her, and she increased her prices from 1 January to cover increases.

"I have six people working for me and everyone's had a pay rise this year to reflect the cost of living," she said. "I think yard owners need to be better at forecasting and understand how the industry is changing."

Ms Dane said the industry has to understand modern employment and business practices and comply with changed laws.

"We're not in the 1980s any more and people are more clued up on their rights, as they should be," she continued. "People want career development but above all, they want to be treated fairly. I think as an industry, we're not good at investing in people and we need to get better at that, then NMW wouldn't be such a drama."

MONITORING COSTS

CHERYL JOHNS, who set up yard directory Livery List followed by an online support group for yard owners, agreed that if yards work out costs, including increased wages, and set prices to reflect this, the NMW rise should not affect business viability.

"A lot of yard owners tend to pluck an amount out of thin air," she told *H&H*. "I've always been an advocate for working out costs and setting prices accordingly.

"They need to be mindful that even if they've just put prices up, for those who employ staff, it's unavoidable that there will be more increases coming. Yard owners need to continuously monitor their costs or they're subsidising other people's horses."

Pictures by Lucy Merrell, Peter Nixon and Alamy

Riders do right by horses despite cost-of-living crisis

Equestrians surveyed plan to maintain spending on their animals' essentials, even if they cut back on themselves

By ELEANOR JONES

RIDERS are determined to do right by their horses despite the tough economic situation, research suggests; cutting back themselves so their animals do not go without.

H&H commissioned a survey of equestrians to determine the impact the cost-of-living crisis is having on their way of life.

Although 77% of respondents are understandably concerned about prices in 2023, more than three quarters are determined to make the most of their passion this year, and more than two thirds said riding is the thing they are looking forward to most.

"It's more important during the cost-of-living crisis, because everything is so gloomy that it's really important to engage with interests that make me feel passionate and excited and alive," one rider said.

The survey asked readers of *H&H* how they expected their spending to change this year, in different areas.

Almost all – 98% – said their spend on horse insurance and feed would stay the same or increase; 96% and 93% said the same for horse health, such as supplements, and rider protection, such as hats and body protectors, respectively.

In terms of spend on saddlery and tack, 88% said this will increase or stay the same; 79% gave this answer for spending on clothing and footwear. Readers are more likely to spend less on themselves, but the same or more on non-negotiables for their horses.

British Horse Society (BHS) director of welfare Gemma Stanford told *H&H* it is "encouraging to see that, despite the cost-of-living crisis, horse owners and keepers continue to feel passionate and excited about spending time with horses".

"We recognise, however, that owning and caring for a horse is a large financial commitment and people will still feel the pressures of rising costs," she said.

"At times like this, we urge equestrians to look ahead and budget as effectively as possible, in a way that doesn't compromise your horse's health and welfare.

"It is important to be careful of false economies. This includes not vaccinating your horse or not having their teeth checked – both of which could result in ill health and prove more costly in future.

"The BHS horse care and welfare helpline offers advice and support for equestrians, in order to ensure they are able to continue to keep the welfare of their horses a priority."

H&H editor-in-chief Sarah Jenkins said: "These survey results may surprise some people given the economic climate, while reassuring others. Riders are certainly not immune to the cost-of-living crisis, but we've long known that most horse owners will cut anything else before looking at their spend on horses.

"Our demographic's disposable income varies, but almost all have a willingness to put horses first – as well as a strong appreciation of what horses do for owners' physical and mental health. This is reflected in the number of comments along the lines of: life might be tough right now, but horses make life better, and so they are where we will spend."

Riders are determined to make the most of their passion

Paris Olympics coverage announced

THE BBC has secured the rights to broadcast the Olympics for the next 10 years, with broadcaster Discovery's paid-for channels remaining the only place to watch every moment.

The rights for Paris had been decided under a previous deal. For fans at home, this will mean a similar situation to Tokyo will extend for Olympic Games coverage up to and including Brisbane 2032.

It means the BBC will show a lot of free coverage, but to watch every event from every sport in full, it is likely that viewers will need to pay.

The deal, announced on 16 January, kicks in from 2026 and is a partnership between the European Broadcasting Union, of which the BBC is a member, and Warner Bros Discovery.

The BBC will provide two simultaneous live streams, a daily highlights programme, digital clips, and radio coverage.

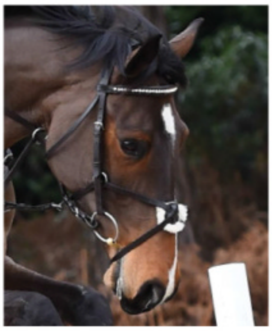
Discovery, whose media platforms include Eurosport and discovery+, continues to hold the pay-TV rights to coverage of "every moment".

"This partnership ensures that audiences in the UK will continue to have free-to-air access to the Olympic Games for the next decade," said BBC Sport director Barbara Slater. **LE**

HORSES IN THE NEWS

NOBLE YEATS

The Emmet Mullins-trained 2022 Grand National winner is being targeted at the Cheltenham Gold Cup and retaining his Aintree crown this spring. Robert Waley-Cohen's eight-year-old has won his last two starts.



MGH CANDY GIRL

Isobel Fox's showjumper, produced by eventer Gemma Stevens, has joined Matt Sampson, to be aimed at bigger shows. Gemma took her to CSI3* grand prix, while Matt's ranking gives access to five-star shows.

GLOCK'S FLIRT

The 2016 dressage World Cup final winner, ridden by Hans Peter Minderhoud for Glock Horse Performance Centre, has died aged 21. Together they won three World Cup legs, reaching the finals twice.

IN BRIEF

BIGGER AND BETTER FOR BADMINTON

BETTER wi-fi and more camping are among the promises for Badminton 2023 – and all tickets must again be booked in advance.

Tickets are on sale for the event, which this year finishes on Monday, 8 May, to minimise clashing with The King's coronation on 6 May.

The aim is for better wi-fi and phone signal and a larger campsite, event director Jane Tuckwell and commercial director Andrew Tucker said, and advance ticket sales will remain the only way to get in. Mr Tucker said this had a huge positive impact on traffic last year, benefiting all.

"We're looking forward to welcoming everyone back who's part of our family," Mrs Tuckwell said. "Roll on May!"

NEW APP LAUNCHED FOR RACING STAFF

RACING WELFARE has launched an app that will give those working in the industry – or who have retired from it – 24/7 support.

It provides information and support on topics including mental and physical health, careers and money matters. The charity will also be able to send push notifications directly to individuals who might benefit from a new service or support article.

Racing Welfare's Brian Watson said the app is a "super resource" and that the "discrete route" to the charity's services will be of huge value to racing staff.

CONVERTING KILOS TO 5,000 POUNDS

FEED manufacturer Spillers has donated £5,000 to Redwings following an equine weight-loss initiative.

The project involved owners' registering the kilos their horses or ponies had lost, which Spillers "converted" into £5,000.

"Our donation not only supports our favourite charity's vital work, the project has helped draw attention to the risks of equine obesity, and supported safe, sustainable weight loss for many horses and ponies," said Spillers' Sarah Nelson.

OBITUARIES

Alastair Gordon Martin-Bird did much for horse sport

ALASTAIR GORDON MARTIN-BIRD

KNOWN to many as "Birdie", the co-founder of Martin Bird Productions (MBP) and Equestrian Vision died on 11 December following an illness, aged 68.

Educated at Charterhouse, Alastair was from an eminent equestrian family. His mother Diana was a founding member of The Pony Club and his sisters Angela and Tessa rode at Badminton. Alastair rode as an individual at the 1972 junior European Eventing Championships and in point-to-points. He met his wife Harriet when she booked riding lessons with his mother, and their daughters Victoria and Alice were keen riders, and followers of the Crawley and Horsham Hunt.

Alastair achieved a land agency qualification at RAC Cirencester then worked for estate agent John D Wood in Horsham. There he contacted Jamie Hawksfield, whom he'd known since childhood and was also a land agent with RH and RW Clutton at East Grinstead. The seeds of their business liaison were sown as Jamie asked Alastair if he would film him riding in a point-to-point. Neither was in love with their profession and yearned to try the business world.

The expanding video market and Alastair's equestrian knowledge led to the forming of Equestrian Vision and MBP. The first contract of significance was Badminton Horse Trials in 1984, where they made the first of many official video reviews of equestrian championships, which would form the backbone of the business.

MBP produced the award-winning *Foxhunting,* with Alastair in his element. He was an excellent producer; meticulous in planning, he never left anything to chance.

Alastair was invited to quote to film the 1989 European Dressage Championships in Luxembourg for live broadcast. It was the start of a successful contract with the FEI that lasted over 20 years. He loved his trips to FEI headquarters and had a good relationship with then FEI president, the Infanta Pilar de Borbon of Spain.

Almost single-handedly Alastair persuaded the FEI to let his company manage all their TV rights. This resulted in highlights programmes of FEI classes worldwide, plus a magazine programme sponsored for years by Rolex. Alastair was the principal pioneer in bringing horse sport to the screen for millions to enjoy.

He did much for the good of the sport and its development.

He is survived by Harriet, Victoria and Alice.

MARCO FUSTE

The FEI jumping director died on 5 January from heart problems, aged 60.

Born in Spain, Mr Fuste had a lifelong love of horses. He worked in sports including American football and tennis before his equestrian career.

Mr Fuste was a former director of showjumping for the Spanish Equestrian Federation, and chef d'equipe of the Spanish showjumping team from 2006 to 2021. He was a member of the FEI jumping committee from 2011 to 2015, and of the European Equestrian Federation, and Nations Cup working groups. He worked at the 1992 Olympics and the 2002 World Equestrian Games, and in 2009 received the Spanish equestrian federation's gold medal, the highest distinction.

Mr Fuste had a wealth of experience from his roles, from athlete to organiser, chef d'equipe and governance administrator.

He became FEI jumping director on 1 February 2021, and oversaw the Tokyo Games, the World Championships and World Cup and Nations Cup finals.

"The FEI and the greater equestrian community have lost a true friend, loyal equestrian, and mentor," said FEI president Ingmar De Vos. "Marco always gave it his all, and everyone respected him for his tenacity, integrity and good business sense.

"He said jumping director was his dream job, and he was our dream candidate; passionate, experienced, knowledgeable, genuine, caring, determined and driven to do the right thing for the sport and the people in it. We will miss him dearly."

He is survived by his wife Isa and daughter Ainhoa.

Marco Fuste always "gave it his all"

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New pony project supports talented young riders

The aim is to unite good ponies with riders who might not have the opportunity otherwise

Noble Superman is one of the ponies on the programme

By BECKY MURRAY

A SCHEME funding top event ponies for talented young riders who might not otherwise have access to such rides, is paving the way for the next generation.

Project Pony is the brainchild of 17-year-old Elizabeth Barratt, who enjoyed success with her pony Noble Superman, including a place on the GB pony squad for the Home Pony International at Blair Castle in 2021. When Elizabeth moved on to horses, she came up with the idea to keep "Boris", but loan him for free to up-and-coming riders aged 12 to 16, who might not have the financial backing to buy a pony of his experience.

The scheme, which is funded by Elizabeth's father Ian, now has 10 ponies including some who have competed in pony trials and championships. These have been loaned out to selected riders to compete, and the riders have access to support and training.

There is no formal application process for Project Pony; riders can be put forward for consideration by other riders, coaches, or parents, and a viewing and strict matching process takes place to ensure the combination is a suitable fit. There is no loan fee, but riders cover the everyday costs of the ponies.

Connie Villani, who helps manage Project Pony with Elizabeth, told *H&H* the aim is to support riders who are "showing a real talent for the sport" and hoping to be in the sport "for the long term".

"Our view is we're educating the next lot of riders. There are lots of children out there who need a leg-up, especially in ponies, and it's giving them a chance," said Connie. "Although we can't give ponies to everyone, we've started organising training days where riders who aren't mounted on our ponies have joined us.

"We've found some riders have good ponies but they maybe just need some extra support, and we're hoping to develop this more.

"We're now looking at raising a bit more awareness about what we're trying to do. In an ideal world we'd love it if more people became involved and supported us, so maybe we can help a few more children."

OPPORTUNITY

BRITISH EVENTING accredited coach Annabel Scrimgeour, who has taught at some of the training days, told *H&H* Project Pony provides a "brilliant opportunity" for riders.

"These high-quality ponies are expensive and obviously not available to all families, so for the children that get the opportunity to ride these ponies, it's a great start for their careers. Equally we've had quite a selection of children bringing their own," she said, adding that she was "very impressed" by the standard of riding at the clinics.

"Some of the riders might be inexperienced, but they've got the talent and ability and they all have a wonderful attitude to learning, which is probably as important as natural talent. They all join in together and support each other, and they're learning life skills."

Sara Ridgway's 13-year-old daughter Annabel, who events with her 20-year-old loan pony Merrie, attended two Project Pony training sessions and has since been offered the ride on one of the scheme's ponies, Akim De L'Arquerie. Sue Dawson, Merrie's owner, contacted Project Pony and recommended Annabel for the programme.

"Annabel had been competing at BE90 with Merrie, but with Merrie getting older she couldn't have gone much further," said Sara.

"We would never have dreamed of being able to afford a top event pony and we wouldn't have been able to enable these opportunities for Annabel without Project Pony by any stretch of the imagination.

"For Annabel her dream has come true. The training offers so much, it's the whole package. The project is so committed to helping the riders be as successful as possible, and we just feel so lucky."

Ian Barratt told *H&H* his daughter Elizabeth had benefited from "everything ponies have to give" and Project Pony was a way to give something back.

"When we started working with a couple of children we could really see the benefit, and with Connie's help we scaled it up," he said. "Eventing is an expensive hobby, and that obviously is going to limit the number of people who can fill their full potential.

"When you realise how many determined, talented and deserving young riders there are out there, the frustration is that you can't help more people. The sport needs to invest in the next generation, and the more we can get the right people with the right ethos and attitude involved at a young age – that's going to keep the sport going for generations."

> *"Our view is that we're educating the next lot of riders"*
> CONNIE VILLANI

Pictures by Alamy and Matt Nuttall Photography

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Five-star eventer **Georgie Goss** and her husband Toby are expecting their first child, a boy, this spring. Georgie said they are "looking forward to this next venture".

Showjumper **Eric Lamaze** will not be technical advisor for the Canadian team after his contract ends. Equestrian Canada said with his "improved health", it is looking forward to his return to riding.

Champion trainer **Paul Nicholls** had his 100th winner of the season on 9 January when Harry Cobden rode a four-timer at Taunton. Five days later, Paul and Harry had another winner, at Kempton.

The Horse & Hound Podcast
H&H discusses the latest news on The Horse & Hound Podcast: horseandhound.co.uk/podcast

New sports body is to focus on horse welfare

The independent group will ensure the best outcome for all horses involved

By ELEANOR JONES

A NEW British Equestrian (BEF) independent body focusing on equine welfare will address the threats to our sport and ensure the best outcome for horses.

This is the message on the equine welfare and ethics advisory group, chaired by Madeleine Campbell, who holds senior positions in universities and veterinary organisations relating to animal welfare and ethics.

"This is a welcome initiative, and I was humbled to be asked to chair it," Professor Campbell said. "The equestrian sporting landscape involves a large and complex range of stakeholders.

"However, I anticipate that the group will provide clear guidance and a framework for everyone to champion welfare in a way that clearly puts the horse's wellbeing first and foremost and ultimately contributes to preserving our sports and to maintaining the social licence to ride and keep horses."

The other members include Jim Eyre, Iain Graham and Roly Owers, CEOs of the BEF, British Showjumping and World Horse Welfare respectively, BEF director of equine sports science and medicine John McEwen, BEF technical director Dickie Waygood and British Horse Society chief operating officer Sarah Phillips.

Mr McEwen said: "I'm delighted that the vision for this group is now a reality. I would like to thank the board for their direct action to address the serious threat to equestrian sports, while ensuring the best wellbeing outcome for the horse."

Mr Owers told *H&H* the formation of the group "clearly reflects the federation's desire to be on the front foot in relation to maintaining and enhancing horse sport's social licence".

"It provides a real opportunity to ensure that horse sport in Britain maintains an ethical and welfare-first approach to its chief stakeholder, the horse," he said.

"Although the spotlight seems very much focused on racing at the moment, social licence is pertinent to all horse sports, and I look forward to being part of this advisory group."

The groups will address the threats to horse sport

Irish showjumper **Anthony Condon** "got an extra big birthday present this year" when he and his partner Laura Johnson welcomed their third child, a baby girl named Addison Olive, on 9 January.

Recently retired jockey **Davy Russell** has returned to the saddle for Gordon Elliott, while Jack Kennedy has a broken leg. Davy wasted no time in riding a winner, Sa Fureur, at Punchestown.

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▲ FIZZY DRINKS
A legendary horsewoman shares an early memory of being asked what the aids are, at a Pony Club quiz. "Lemonade and orangeade!" she replied. Top marks, that child, and we'd say add a soupçon of gin in a few years' time. Cheers!

▲ VISION
A new online optical illusion test asks whether one can spot the horse in a photo of a forest, within eight seconds. We'd adapt the challenge to ask if you can find the horse in the field in the dark, within eight minutes. And the answer's probably no...

▲ CLASS
Spotted online, some tips on how to look classy and elegant. Number one, keep your nails clean and polished. Number two, always smell nice. We stopped there; Eau du Merde du Cheval and nails – we have our own class.

GOOD WEEK

BAD WEEK

▼ CONCERNS
Another call has been made to a council by a walker about a horse who appeared dead. The owner had to point out that her pony likes to sleep, on his side with his legs sticking straight out, by the footpath, and he's very much alive. The best part is that his name is Slim Shady. Will he please stand up?

▼ CIRCLES
Overheard as a youngster was riding some interesting shaped "circles". After a couple of efforts, the trainer asked: "What is a circle?" "It is an end with no beginning and a beginning with no end," the rider replied. Good point. Not sure how that would fit on a test sheet, though. At C...

▼ WEATHER
To the Met Office/BBC Weather/Sky gods. When we said we didn't fancy Dry January, this was not what we meant. Please turn off the rain tap immediately. And pour the gin. Ta.

Genes linked to success identified in racehorses

Researchers have discovered genes linked to muscle metabolism and neurobiology in racing breeds

SCIENTISTS have identified a set of genes linked to successful racehorses, in new research.

The study compared genomes of thoroughbred, Arabian and Mongolian racehorses to equines bred for other disciplines and leisure. It found a set of genes that play a significant role in muscle, metabolism and neurobiology.

The genes were clearly different in racing horses and were common to all racing breeds, compared to non-racing breeds.

"Since the discovery of the 'speed gene' in 2009, we have generated genetic data for thousands of thoroughbreds and horses from other breeds," said University College Dublin (UCD) professor Emmeline Hill, lead scientist on the project and chief science officer at Plusvital.

"This is the first time this set of genes has been linked to the success of racing breeds. Two of the genes were previously identified for performance in thoroughbreds and Arabians, but we asked what genes were common to all racing breeds and different from non-racing breeds."

Prof Hill added: "We have discovered a set of genes common to racing horses, but not all horses within a racing breed have the advantageous gene version, so these findings will be useful to identify those most suitable for racing or for breeding."

The research was carried out by scientists from UCD, the Royal Agricultural University and Irish equine science company Plusvital, as well as others in Asia, Europe and North America.

The study compared horses bred for racing with other breeds

By LUCY ELDER

The study's co-author, UCD professor David MacHugh, added: "Although racing is a multifactorial trait, with management and training having a considerable influence on the success of a racehorse, this study provides good evidence for major-effect genes shaping the racing trait in horse populations."

James Crabtree, a member of the British Equine Veterinary Association's health and medicines committee, told *H&H* this is an "extremely interesting and in-depth study".

"It is interesting that only two of the genes were previously identified for performance in the thoroughbred and the Arabian breeds.

"The genes identified are known to be involved in muscle function, metabolism, and neurobiology and are proposed as genes that make a breed successful at racing compared to non-racing breeds."

Dr Crabtree added that although this information "may potentially drive breeding decisions", the thoroughbred now has very low levels of genetic diversity.

He referenced 2022 study *Inbreeding depression and the probability of racing in the thoroughbred horse*, adding that this showed a 10% increase in inbreeding is associated with a 7% lower probability of ever racing.

"So it is clear that there are other wider genomic considerations to bear in mind when making breeding decisions. Nevertheless, this is exciting and informative science," he said.

And finally... rescue mission

WHEN North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service was alerted to a horse stuck in floodwater, the team leapt into action.

Crews prepared to investigate, ready to save the stricken horse.

And found it was a statue.

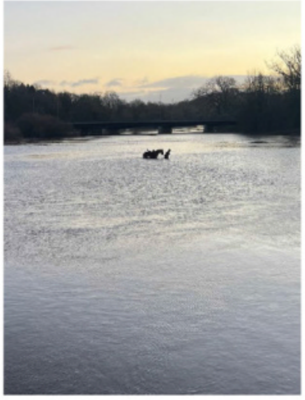
"An officer trotted off to check out the situation and discovered a statue of a horse," said group manager Bob Hoskins.

"There was 'neigh' further assistance required on this occasion."

The metal sculpture – a World War I soldier leading his horse – stands on land, usually. It is owned by British Canoeing.

It was installed in 2018 to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the war.

It was left where it was, with no fear of harm to life or limb. Just possibly the minor risk of rust. **EJ**



Pictures by Bob Hoskins and Alamy

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LETTERS

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EQUINE ID ISSUES

> “We still have to abide by EU law to trade with them”
>
> CAROLINE SUSSEX

WITH reference to your news feature on equine identification (15 December), I disagree with many of the findings. Since leaving the EU, the enormity of problems for horse owners, riders and breeders has been huge. As we are no longer in the EU, we are a third country and we still have to abide by EU law and regulations to trade with them. To suggest that we can lead the way is very short sighted.

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) have not listened or responded to questions from the 826 Equine Studbooks Association (ESA) who represent breed societies. I also question the Central Equine Database’s (CED) data after checking to see if my horses were correctly recorded on it; on my record, there was a Universal Equine Life Number (UELN) with no information.

All the information was correct on the system of the Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO), the Arab Horse Society, and was sent to the CED. However, the CED did not have the name of the horse recorded, nor the transfer of ownership information.

I’d like the Government to listen to the problems facing most pedigree horse breeders and not just deal with this on a welfare and possible disease outbreak situation. Digital may be the future, but not at the cost to the industry and those who rely on it.

Caroline Sussex
Andover, Hants

A Defra spokesperson replies:
“We are keen to address claims made in your reader’s letter regarding the Government’s consultation on improvements to equine identification and traceability. Industry feedback is valuable and informs our decision-making. Consultation responses from the 826 ESA and several breed societies were included in our analysis. We also have monthly meetings with the chair of the 826 ESA.

“As the consultation document made clear, the

Defra reforms aim to make digital horse data entry more accurate

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HORSE&HOUND NEXT WEEK

GROOM SPECIAL

HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF AS A GROOM, PLUS TOP GROOMS’ BEST DAYS

LONDON 52

MEET THE BADMINTON WINNER

COLIC

VET INSIGHT ON THIS COMMON CONDITION

PLUS Interview with top US event rider Ariel Grald, showing opinion from Robert Walker, showjumping from Northcote, hunting with the Cottesmore and more

Pictures by Lucy Merrell, Getty Images/iStockphoto, Peter Nixon and Alamy

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*Luthersson N, Bolger C, Fores P, Barfoot C, Nelson S, Parkin TDH &amp; Harris P (2019) Effect of changing diet on gastric ulceration in exercising horses and ponies following cessation of omeprazole treatment JEVS 83 article 102742

proposals focus on improving animal welfare and disease control, aligned with the Government's commitment to protect biosecurity. We are in regular contact with the 826 ESA to understand the problems they face, so that these are addressed in future policy.

"Finally, the letter notes concerns over the use of digital tools in managing equine data. It is the responsibility of the PIO to enter data fully and correctly. Our reforms aim to make this process more accurate and modernise the wider system to enhance welfare, disease control, public health and trade, as well as make life easier for the majority of horse owners."

COMING CLEAN

REGARDING Joanne Shaw and Katherine Jones' letters (29 December, 2022) on changes in the riding world, I agree with Katherine that nothing looks more pleasing than a well-turned-out horse and rider in what has long been standard wear.

As for flunkeys – people performing menial tasks for someone else, especially with obsequiousness, as Joanne mentions – I don't think there are many of those about these days.

When I rode, twill jodhpurs were the order of the day and yes, jolly hard to keep clean. Now we have them re-christened as riding trousers, in lightweight man-made fibres. Surely everyone has seen the advertisement for a certain detergent pod that will restore runners' mud-encrusted T-shirts to dazzling whiteness with one wash? No need for flunkeys there, just one's own, self-operated washing machine.

And now I am off to make my own tea.

Jane Hunt-Webb
North Tawton, Devon

LET PEOPLE CHOOSE

CONTINUING the debate about the colour of breeches at competitions, I think that white breeches should not be insisted upon. It's a total misery keeping them white and clean, especially after a rainy outdoor competition, after which they are almost ready to throw away.

Let people be free to decide which colour of breeches they want to wear, as long as they match the competition jacket.

I also agree that we should aim for versatile horsemanship – not just staying in one discipline, but developing our skills in as many areas as possible.

Hannie de Boer
Dr Compagnie, the Netherlands

REVERSING THE TREND

REGARDING the debate as to whether FEI dressage should maintain its "double bridle only" stance, I wonder if it would be helpful to reverse the question.

First, assume there is no pressure from the masses regarding welfare, but do consider true welfare items, then answer this: if, since the early days of competitive dressage, the rules had allowed a choice of a double, snaffle or simple bitless bridle, would people now be campaigning for a rule change to ban both the snaffle and bitless bridles?

If one's honest answer to this is no, then the current arguments are simply resistance to change dressed up as a rational argument.

Liz Hole MRCVS
Doddiscombsleigh, Devon

The *H&H* Quiz

1) Who was "Foxford"?
2) Name the odd one out: pinworm, roundworm, tapeworm or ringworm.
3) Which winner in the showjumping classes at last year's London International is a former Burghley young event horse final winner?

Answers from 12 January
1) They all won the Triple Crown
2) 2010 **3)** Luna Mist, Dreamaway II, CHF Cooliser.

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Horse & Hound, Future Publishing Ltd,
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Magazine Editor/Eventing/Pony Club
Pippa Roome *(07815 442555)*
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ONLY IN HORSE & HOUND

Perfect the things that others don't

Anna Ross offers advice on staying motivated to train throughout winter

THIS time of year can be challenging for many, and inspiration is needed to keep going with training until spring. The new prix st georges and inter I championship for silver riders at the Winter Dressage Championships is a great idea, and has certainly flushed a few fair-weather riders out of hiding.

Motivation can come from a desire for success or a fear of failure, or looking silly. For some, yelling "Think of your ex" can generate a new level of impulsion, while others imagine the lap of honour as they are mucking out in -7°C.

Every rider can maximise on the "cheap mark". I often hear the complaint that a famous rider "got the marks" because they were better known. Sometimes a reality check is needed. It's more likely that they did a better test because they halted square and hit every transition on the marker, because their livelihood and future rides genuinely depend on it.

> *"Imagine a lap of honour as you muck out in -7°C"*

Both horse and rider should also be fit enough to train – rather than stopping every second circuit to discuss recent life events and have a sneaky break – and have well-fitting equipment, be on time and warmed up ready for a session.

On the flip side, some riders have a perfectionist streak, which can lead to overtraining. The trick is to train smarter not harder, so if you have a repeated training problem, seek advice. Re-presenting a horse that's making mistakes in the exercises again and again, and using the arena like a velodrome, leads to fatigue.

Anna Ross is an international grand prix dressage rider who has represented Britain on numerous occasions.

OPINION

Success comes from perfecting the very small details that most people can't be bothered with.

CHECK TRAINER RECORDS

HAVING regular help is key, and the constant thirst for improvement among riders creates a buoyant market for trainers. I implore all those looking for a trainer to check out records and qualifications, though, as my bull***t detector has been triggered a few times recently.

In the last month, I have seen "international trainers" advertised who have not ridden above medium level and many "groundwork" trainers who appear to have watched a couple of YouTube tutorials, purchased a cut-price flag after the World Cup was over and leapt right onto that bandwagon. These people cannot be compared to those who have trained extensively and put themselves out there to be measured.

A stonking competition record helps attract clients, but can be misleading. If horses were bought ready trained as schoolmasters, then the client could be better off learning from the rider who trained the horse, rather than the one with the results.

Qualifications to prove competence – for those who haven't had the finances to access top competition – are a good idea. I recently passed my performance dressage coach BHSI exams. Although I've been fortunate to have competitive success at a high level, I have an interest in helping talented riders who lack resources, since that is my own background. So I wanted to see if I felt the qualification was relevant to those I help, and I'm a great believer in putting your money where your mouth is.

Horses are great levellers, with a habit of sorting the wheat from the chaff very effectively – in more ways than one.

"HE LIKES TO LIVE AMONG THE LADIES"

THE new year in our stables was heralded with the arrival of a new breeding stallion from our friends at Blue Hors stud in Denmark. The exquisite Viconte has arrived along with an unusual set of care notes. He likes to live among the ladies, so is smugly ensconced next to his future wife Mary, whose scores have increased by 3% since he's been around.

International riders are definitely looking for horses inside the UK now and this collaboration was the brainchild of Lorna Wilson to help ensure British breeders could have direct access to world-class stallions. Beth Bainbridge, who competes these stallions, is used to them needing a quick "appointment" when an urgent call comes in. **H&H**

● ***How are you getting motivated to train this winter? Let us know at hhletters@futurenet.com***

There are easy marks to be had in being accurate and halting square – and this is where professionals tend to pick up points, Anna Ross reminds riders

Picture by Lucy Merrell

ONLY IN HORSE & HOUND

'Showjumper versus businessman'

Joe Trunkfield reveals how the cost of living crisis has hit equestrian sport

OPINION

EVERYONE is busy with goals for the new year, but the cost of living crisis is affecting all aspects of the sport, from staff to show centres.

I worked apprenticeships with Corinne Beech (née Collins) and Euro Sport Horse, learning all about the running costs of a competition yard before setting up on my own, although my parents always told me, 'You're not going to earn a living being a showjumper' and they were right!

> *"The opportunity for being successful on talent and hard work alone has gone"*

It's a challenge between being a showjumper versus a businessman.

The biggest struggle of running a yard now is offering fully comprehensive livery at £250 per week. That's £35 a day to provide facilities, bedding, feed, rugs, tack, insurance, vehicles, electricity and a wage.

The champion jockey AP McCoy compared winning and his competitive satisfaction to an addiction, and all riders find themselves hooked on the sport. A successful show or exciting young horse motivates and inspires, pushing struggles with your bank balance or impending rent to the back of your mind.

But total passion can leave your business in jeopardy. On more than one occasion I've needed to win to pay the bill and get home. To succeed, you need competitive horses. As Holly Smith has said, you have to sell a lot of normal horses to fund the good ones yet the real money is in selling the good ones.

The opportunity for being successful on talent and hard work alone has gone. The high-end investors and owners understandably want to see their horses at the best shows and in top-quality facilities, which only come from well-funded yards.

FEELING THE SQUEEZE

HARDER times are certainly ahead and I've already noticed conflict between show centres and competitors. Riders are quick to complain about the rising costs of entry fees, hook-ups and stabling while prize money remains the same. I understand the competitors' struggle but can also see the organisers' view.

Those at Arena UK told me their electricity bill has doubled, with that for December – a quiet month – coming in at £11,000. They said, "Staffing costs have risen but we are short-staffed as no-one wants to work. Food costs and shavings have gone up. As wages rise so does the insurance, but none of the riders want to pay more. The winter classic shows cost £15,000 before a horse sets foot in the arena."

Solihull-based rising showjumping star Joe Trunkfield, who landed a winning double at the London International, is also a producer of young horses, trainer and runs a livery business.

Speaking as a young horse producer, there is no better place for horses to learn their job than in the ring, be it a local show, a dedicated young horse event with a big atmosphere, or our county shows. What better production system is there for a seven-year-old than to jump a 1.30m or accumulator at a county show and experience everything from bouncy castles to cattle and motorbikes?

However, the cost of diesel means that attending these shows with the mindset of producing, more than being competitive, is no longer an option. I've had to cut down on the number of shows I go to and I am doing more of this training at home instead, therefore not supporting my local centres. I wonder if this will affect the horses later in their careers.

HOW DO WE ADAPT?

WHAT can British Showjumping, which receives membership fees from centres, competitors, owners and officials, do to help the future of the sport? It used to contribute to the prize money for the winter classic series. Why has that stopped?

I'd also like to see a clearer system in the sport between professionals earning a living and the hobby rider.

Will we lose our rising stars as a result of soaring costs? The talented yet not wealthy rider could certainly find that freelance training or staying at home breaking livery horses is the way forward. Equally, talented horses may never get to fulfil their potential as the professional has to sell them to the wealthy amateur in order to make a living.

The current financial situation is having a massive effect; let's hope that we can start to find steps towards a brighter future. **H&H**

"Total passion can leave your business in jeopardy," says Joe Trunkfield, who has "needed to win to pay the bill and get home" on more than one occasion

Pictures by Lucy Merrell and Peter Nixon

HORSE&HOUND
ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Photographer to The Queen

Henry Dallal on sparking a passion for photography and horses, and why he always takes his camera out hunting

When I was about nine years old, I fell in love with everything about horses. My mother opened me up to riding horses, while my father gave me my first camera, a box Brownie, and took me hiking in the mountains in Iran, where I grew up. All three passions have been in my blood ever since. What inspires me is to experience great moments anywhere in the world and, with a camera, I try to capture the beauty of the moment.

Photographing the nomads and nature of Iran was exciting for me until the revolution in 1979, when our family came to London. I was feeling depressed, not knowing what to do with my life. One morning at dawn, I heard the clip-clopping sound of horses in the street outside. I jumped out of bed and saw the Household Cavalry on their morning exercise.

That image sparked me to redirect my life, and I always get emotional telling the story. But it wasn't until moving back to England from Colorado in 1994 that I was somehow invited to the Hyde Park barracks in Knightsbridge as a civilian rider.

I became absolutely and totally fascinated by the pageantry, the ceremony and all those amazing horses. It blew me away then and still does today. I asked if I could bring in my camera and that started the journey.

My challenge is to create art out of the kaleidoscope of colour, tradition and personality that I experience. I tell a story through my pictures. The equine pageantry is absolutely beautiful in my eyes. I worked with the Household Cavalry for many years and, in 2003, I published the book *Pageantry & Performance: The Household Cavalry in a Celebration of Pictures.*

I first photographed The late Queen for the Golden Jubilee in 2002 – and 20 years later, more photographs of her have followed, including the iconic image released on her 96th birthday. It was always such an honour and a privilege to take her portrait, but she was also easy to photograph, especially if there were horses involved.

In 2019, I remember The Queen visiting the King's Troop while they were performing at the Royal Windsor Horse Show. They presented Her Majesty with a horse, a charger that she had given to them a few years earlier. Even though I was behind her, I sensed how she and the charger connected, and with the troopers around us. I wanted to capture the moment; incredible images of the way the horse locked on to The Queen and looked straight at her.

She also took the time to talk to various members of the troop – officers and soldiers – unprompted. In all the times I've been around The Queen, it was not unusual for her to take time to talk to the people who were there, such as grooms and members of the Household Cavalry or King's Troop, as well as the horses.

The Queen isn't the reason I do what I do, but being asked from time to time to take a picture of her has been the biggest honour for me. Her state funeral procession was out of this world with the level of discipline, tradition and passion shown by every person involved. The whole world looks up to Britain for such pageantry, and it has to continue.

Every photograph I take has its own wonderful story and memory for me. I love adventure, and some of mine include retracing the footsteps of Lawrence of Arabia in the desert and traversing the mountains of the Hindu Kush or Hajar mountains in Oman on the back of a horse, plus more wonderful trips I have done with friends. All have produced fantastic opportunities for photography.

Once, I was invited to Seattle to give a multimedia show about the Household Cavalry. Reading the airline magazine on the way, I learnt about an American Indian tribe on the Colville Reservation near the Oregon border, who hold the "Suicide Race" once a year, for the American Indian youth.

It turned out the race was happening just three days later, so as soon as I landed and had cleared immigration, I found a public phone box, got through to one of the organisers and arranged to visit them for the race.

They gallop down a steep hill and into a river. It's dangerous; just to stay on the horse is considered a rite of passage for the American Indian youth.

I asked where the tribe gets the horses from and they said, "We hunt them in our reservation." Once a year, each family is allowed to hunt a single horse from a wild herd. I had to experience this amazing phenomenon for myself, so six months later I showed up in the depths of winter with my heavy-duty camera and joined them. I hate to use the phrase, but it was just like the movies!

You track the herd using their hoofprints in the snow, join them on your own horse at full gallop and rope in a wild horse. It was fascinating to see the newly caught wild horse interacting with the domesticated herd in the corral that evening.

We live in West Sussex, and I go hunting with the Chiddingfold, Leconfield & Cowdray Hunt. My wife and I moved to Charlton about 10 years ago; it is thought to be where the first recorded fox hunt took place. There is no shortage of photographic inspiration – I do landscapes – and I always take my camera out hunting with me, too. I love to go with my son. He is eight years old and already loves to ride and also to take pictures, thanks to his mum and dad. **H&H**

● ***As told to Polly Bryan***

NEXT WEEK **Arc winner Alpinista's groom Annabel Willis**

Picture by Scot Alessi Photography

“The Queen was easy to photograph, especially if there were horses involved”

Outdoor living

Horses obviously are adapted to outdoor living, but a little extra input from us as their keepers is invaluable. *Kieran O'Brien MRCVS* explains how to make it work in the coldest, wettest season of the year

TWENTY-four-hour turnout during the winter months brings many advantages for horses and their keepers – a chance for horses to socialise in a herd rather than live in solitary confinement, a lower risk of colic, and the labour-saving benefits of managing horses in a group rather than singly.

But it also presents challenges. These include increased risk of injury, the requirement for the horses – and their keepers – to cope with adverse weather, and the necessity to ensure the individual and often diverse needs of each horse are met in a herd situation.

Feeding forage is inherently warming as its digestion produces heat within the horse's digestive tract

Beating the cold

ON cold days, the horse keeps its core body temperature warm by reducing the blood supply to its extremities. The ears and legs become cold, and the hairs in the skin become more erect, increasing the depth of the insulating layer of air close to the skin. Once the air temperature drops below what is called the lower critical temperature (LCT) the horse increases its metabolic rate to generate heat. Studies have shown the LCT varies within and between breeds, but it is around 0–5°C, far lower than our own LCT of just over 20°C.

The necessity to increase its metabolic rate to keep warm causes a horse to "burn" its fat stores. This may be usefully exploited in overweight horses as a method of weight loss, whereas rugging them in winter clearly will negate this beneficial effect.

If a horse is very cold, it starts shivering – a reflex action triggered by an area in the brain stimulated by cold skin. Shivering muscles generate heat as a by-product of their contractions.

Feeding forage to out-wintered horses is inherently "warming" as its digestion is only 40% efficient. The remainder causes heat production in the digestive tract, warming the horse.

The ease with which a horse can tolerate cold conditions depends on its opportunity to have become cold-acclimatised. The density of the fat layer under its skin, its breed, its age, and, importantly, the availability of shelter are also important factors. Young horses have less body fat to insulate them, and older horses are less able to regulate their body temperature, are generally less active, have a less efficient digestive system and may have health problems.

Pictures by Kieran O'Brien and Alamy

Staying dry

THE native breeds of pony have evolved a coat that is almost waterproof. Even on very wet days, if the coat of any out-wintered cold-adapted native pony is parted the skin is usually virtually dry – and warm. They have a dense, soft insulating under-layer that traps air between the hairs. This inner layer is overlaid with an outer layer of longer hairs.

These latter hairs have an oily coating secreted by sebaceous glands, which open into the hair follicles. This water-repelling oil is continuously secreted onto the hairs at a low level. If the horse rolls (and this may be one reason why they do it) contact with the ground compresses the follicles, causing more oil to be squeezed onto the hair. Shampooing the horse removes this oily layer, significantly reducing the horse's natural weatherproofing.

In contrast to native ponies, in the finer breeds of horse the inner soft layer of the coat is shallower, and the outer layer of hair is shorter. In addition to an overall reduced insulating effect, there is less resistance to the chilling impact of rain on the skin. Rapid evaporation of water from a wet coat caused by wind results in what is known as wind-chill, and may be quite marked in, for example, thoroughbreds.

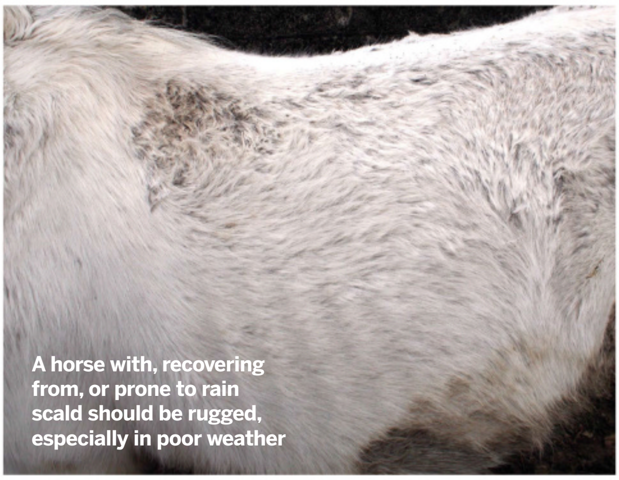
When rain lands on the horse, the outer hairs collapse and bunch together in a downward direction, deflecting and channelling the water off the horse and protecting the inner layer from wetting. But the collapse of the outer coat causes less air to be trapped in the deeper layer, increasing heat loss.

When the rain stops, drying of the wet hairs occurs by evaporation of the moisture. Unless the horse is groomed, the segmentation of the hair into bunches persists for several days after drying, prolonging the cooling effect.

The response of horses to rain seems to be highly individual. Some will immediately seek shelter (either under trees or in a field shelter) while others seem unmoved and continue grazing. When rain is very heavy or accompanied by strong winds, most will try to find some protection, for example by standing against a fence or a tree line. The horse's rear-end is directed towards the wind, ensuring the smallest possible area of the body is exposed. The tail and dock protect the hairless areas underneath.

The distinctive segmentation of a horse's coat in the rain helps channel away water

When should a turnout rug be used?



A horse with, recovering from, or prone to rain scald should be rugged, especially in poor weather

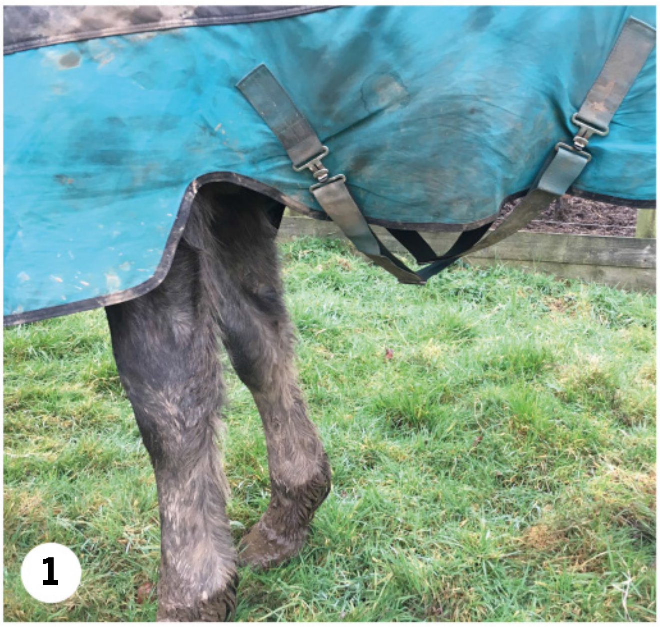
WHETHER or not a horse will suffer from the effects of cold and rain depends on the horse, the length of time outdoors, and the protection available. In deciding whether to use a rug, the necessity to keep horses clean for riding, or warm if clipped, will be an overriding consideration for most owners.

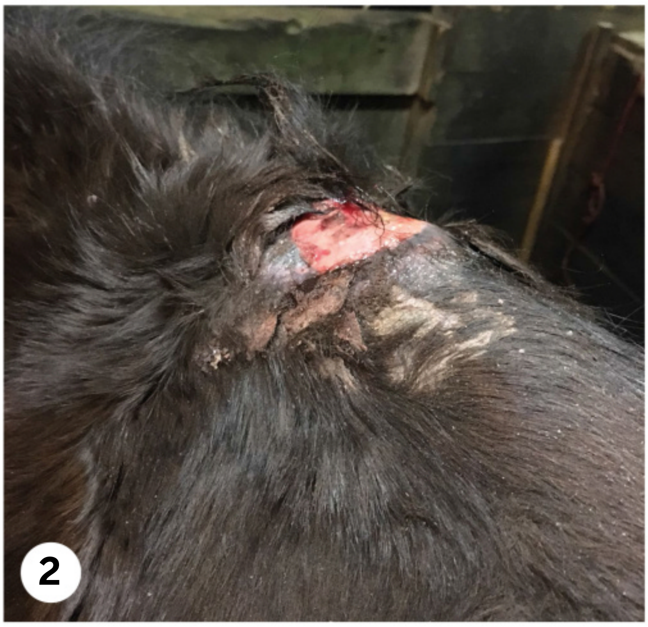
Where these do not apply, the following situations will also determine the need for using a rug, especially if the weather is windy also:

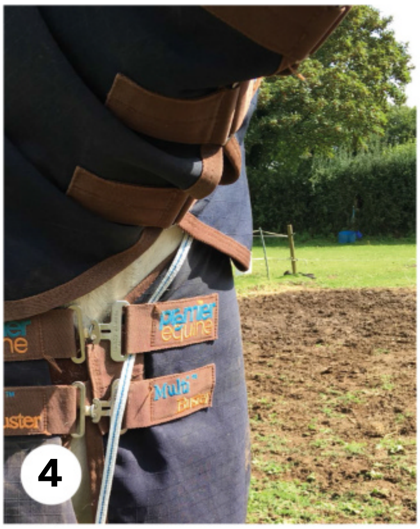
- If the horse is very young, or elderly.
- If adequate cold adaptation has not been allowed and it is a fine-coated breed.
- If the horse is underweight and has little fat cover.
- If the area where the horse is grazing is exposed, with little shelter from wind or rain.
- If the horse is ill.
- If the horse is recovering from, or is prone to, the skin infection known as rain scald.

Horses that are overweight should be rugged only if it is necessary to keep them clean (unless they are clipped), and only a thin unlined rain sheet should be used.

> *"Twenty-four-hour turnout during the winter months brings many advantages – a chance for horses to socialise in a herd, a lower risk of colic, and labour-saving benefits for their keepers"*







1. Be sure to avoid loosely fitted rug straps as a horse can catch a leg, potentially leading to serious injury

2. Severe skin damage such as this can result from a rug that is too small over the withers, especially in horses with high withers

3. Use a fillet string: a wind-blown rug will fail to do its job, and may cause a horse to startle and injure itself

4. A piece of electric fence tape on a rug, touching the horse, may encourage respect for electric fences, reducing the risk of entanglement

Turnout rugs: what can go wrong?

● DON'T HAVE THE CROSS SURCINGLES TOO LOOSE

Horses may get their legs trapped in the cross surcingles if they are too loose. They should fit snugly to the horse's belly, with just enough room for the flat (rather than the width, as is traditional) of a hand to slide easily between the strap and the belly.

● ALWAYS USE A FILLET STRING

The fillet string stops the back of the rug from blowing up over the horse's back when it is standing with its back to the wind. If the tail comes outside or where the fillet string is broken or missing, horses can be suddenly startled by the rug blowing over their backs, causing them to panic or rush forward, even going through fences.

● BEWARE OF WITHER INJURIES

Horses with high withers with little muscle around them, or if wearing a rug that is too small, are at risk of developing severe damage to the skin over the withers unless the rug fits perfectly. Always check for any sensitivity in the withers by regularly pressing down on them with the fingertips. The horse should show no reaction to this. If they do react, it's an important early warning sign that must be acted upon.

● IS IT TRULY WATERPROOF?

Surprisingly, rain scald infection is not uncommon in out-wintered horses wearing "waterproof" rugs. Although often attributed to condensation under the rug, this seems an unlikely cause as the underside of the rug is warm. It is far more likely to be caused by a leaking rug. Remove the rug after a bout of rain and see if the rug or skin is wet underneath.

● ADJUST THE LEG STRAPS CORRECTLY

Leg strap rubs are common. It should be easy to pass a hand between the leg straps and the inside of the horse's thigh, but they should not be too loose. The straps should always loop through each other.

● BEWARE OF ELECTRIC FENCES

Hungry horses and ponies soon realise that the rug protects them from being shocked by the fence, and they lean over it to get to grass on the other side. They can become entangled in the fence or impaled by the poles. A quick way to discourage this is to sew a piece of electric fence tape to the inside seam of the neck and allow the free end of the tape to dangle in front, where it will contact the fence.

● ALWAYS REMOVE THE RUG AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK

Don't assume all is okay under there. Remove the rug at least weekly and check for rubs, rain scald and other problems. H&H

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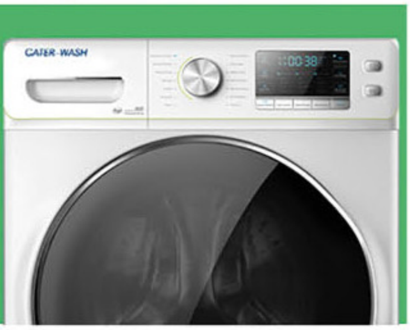

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Need to know

HORTONS MAGNIFICO

Stable name: Bear
Sex: gelding
Class: heavyweight show cob
Height: 155cm
Breeding: unknown
Owner: Lauren Cunningham-Bryce
Rider/producer: Justine Armstrong-Small
Age: eight
Best results: 2021, first novice cobs British Show Horse Association (BSHA) southern spring, third heavyweight cobs Royal International Horse Show (RIHS) final, first Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) heavyweight cob qualifier Stoneleigh Horse Show, first HOYS heavyweight cob and reserve champion Edenbridge and Oxted, first HOYS heavyweight cob Ashbourne, first heavyweight cob UK national championships; 2022, first HOYS heavyweight cob qualifier Stoneleigh, first BSPS Area 15 RIHS heavyweight cob qualifier and reserve champion, first heavyweight cob and overall supreme cob RIHS final.

Picture by Peter Nixon

COB
Special

Hortons Magnifico

The lightly shown heavyweight contender blew his connections away at the 2022 Royal International by winning the overall cob championship. *Alex Robinson* learns more about this true-to-type chap

PRODUCER JUSTINE ARMSTRONG-SMALL

"BEAR was originally found in Ireland by Julie Marchant of Horton's Irish Horses and we first saw him advertised in December 2020 by Georgina Wilkes who had him on her yard for his former owner, Racheal Pearce.

"We jumped in the car to go and view him and, after arriving in half-darkness, we had a ride on him in the school. I've always liked his stamp; he's typey, well-built and is an out-and-out heavyweight with plenty of limb. He also gives a comfy ride and has a nice temperament to match.

"The 2021 season was his novice year, but he qualified for the Royal International (RIHS), finishing third at the final in July. He adored the show; he's a rangey horse and he thrived in the big grass ring. His championship victory at the RIHS 2022 was my first overall win at the show. Bear was initially pulled in second after the go-round in the heavyweight class behind a more seasoned cob, so I was delighted when he was called forward to win. It all came together in the championship and he went beautifully, not phased by the atmosphere in the slightest.

"We've taken him drag hunting, and he loved it, jumping all the hedges and fences. He has a real pop in him and we hope to contend some working show horse classes in the future.

"At home, he's known fondly as Captain Chaos as everything possible, from the reins to the water bucket, goes in his mouth."

Owner Lauren Cunningham-Bryce

"I'D been on the hunt for a horse that was both safe enough for me to hack around the block and quality enough to show, which is no mean feat. When Justine phoned me one Saturday night to say she thought she'd found the ideal horse, but that we had to act fast, we dropped everything and went to view him the next evening.

"Justine rode him as well as my daughter, Florence, who was just 10 years old at the time, and he was perfect. I knew he was going to be the one, although we never bought him with any expectations and couldn't predict how he was going to develop.

"Unfortunately, when he was crowned supreme cob at the RIHS last year, I couldn't attend. I'd mixed up my dates and had booked a flight out to a summer holiday on the same day he was in the ring. I landed in Naples airport to several FaceTime calls from the team. We were all crying hysterically; we couldn't believe it.

"Bear is a substantial cob and sometimes he doesn't realise his size, but he's a lovely, kind person. We feel lucky to have him. His former owner, Racheal, keeps in regular contact with us and she gets just as much out of his success as we do. Justine has done a fantastic job with him and they have formed a lovely partnership."

JUDGE DAVID INGLE

"WHEN I co-judged this horse to win the heavyweight class and take the cob championship at the RIHS in 2022, I was instantly taken with him when he entered the ring. He fitted the brief and was a true heavyweight cob.

"He gave a lovely, forward ride and he was keen to do the job. He seemed to be enjoying himself and was working with me throughout. Ultimately, it was his day, though the standard of both cob classes was fantastic and each exhibit was lovely in one way or another.

"In the championship, he maintained his jolly disposition and he stepped up to the mark. There is a bit of a gap between the classes and the championship, but he continued to perform. Our champion and our reserve [Randalstown Rolex] were a good, matched pair." **H&H**

> *"He gave a lovely, forward ride and he was keen to do the job"*
>
> DAVID INGLE

A marvellous melting

IT'S a well-known fact that a cob is a type, not a breed. But what breeds actually go into making a cob? It's a question with many possible answers, none of which are easy to come by, for one simple reason – many cob owners have no idea how their horses are bred.

Of the 20 lightweight cobs forward at Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) in 2022, 14 of them had no breeding listed, including the winner, Richard Leeman's Love Joy, who went on to claim the overall cob of the year title.

In the heavyweight section, 16 of the 19 cobs listed in the catalogue had no breeding information, again including the winner, Susan Granger's Freddie Kruger.

So when it comes to figuring out how a cob comes to be, where do we go from here?

"A true-to-type cob, only God knows how it's made," says Val Sheehan, known in the showing industry as "the cob finder".

"A cob should be low to the ground, with short cannon bones and quality limbs, but how you get that type varies so much."

The most dominant influence comes from Irish bloodlines, whether that is the Irish Draught, commonly seen among those cobs who do possess breeding history, or the traditional Irish cob. Interestingly, it is the maxi cob division with a higher proportion of registered breeding – seven of the 15 at HOYS 2022 – and the Irish Draught is prevalent among those.

Well-known Irish Draught cobs include Hallmark IX, the maxi cob who stood supreme champion at HOYS in 2013 with Simon Reynolds, and Lord Alexander, maxi cob champion at HOYS 2021 and Royal International 2022 with Stephen Norris.

But if you dig a little deeper, there's a fascinating array of breeds that pop up in the pedigrees of cobs across the disciplines.

IT'S common for Irish Draught blood to be combined with thoroughbred, producing the world-renowned Irish Sport Horse, which is the basis for the breeding of several successful cobs. Others have Irish Draught lines mixed with warmblood, such as Vicky Smith's prolific lightweight Bling Cobsby, HOYS winner in 2018 and twice Royal Windsor champion, known at home as Marco.

Marco's dam is a jumping-bred Canadian warmblood mare called Trixie, who is by the Nimmerdor son Ahorn, out of a Dutch-bred mare named Imalve.

"Marco was an accident; his breeder never set out to breed a cob," explains Vicky. "The mare was out in the field and there was an Irish stallion next door, who jumped in with her."

That stallion was Come T, a registered Irish Draught by Carrabawn View, whose other offspring have gone on to become useful sport horses.

"Marco was difficult as a four-year-old. He was bought by Lisha Leeman and I actually judged him at Bucks County when I was a probationary judge. Although he was

pot

When it comes to a cob's pedigree, even the experts aren't sure what makes a good one. *Polly Bryan* tracks down some common themes in this much-loved type

COB
Special

nervous, I liked him. Lisha contacted me in November 2016 to ask if I was interested in buying him. My partner Alan wanted a cob as a project, so we bought him the following April for £3,500," says Vicky.

"That summer he was so tricky to show, and I decided he had to do something else. I hunted him all winter and took him to dressage. I gave him a real job and it was the making of him. That's where the warmblood in him shows – he needs to do lots of things and be kept busy. The next season, he came out and won at HOYS."

Marco went on to win the cob title at Royal Windsor in both 2019 and 2021, famously beating Vicky's idol Allister Hood and the legendary Our Cashel Blue.

"Marco's now easy to ride, with a hell of a walk and this incredible quality, and I think that's because of his breeding. At Windsor, at that early stage in the year when some other cobs are not quite ready in their coats, Marco always looks really good," says Vicky.

A cob is a type not a specific breed, with an array of breeds popping up in their pedigrees – if the parentage is known at all. Right: "Supercob" Mulrys Error (right, with eventer Ben Hobday) is one cob whose pedigree is documented. He is by a Flat-bred thoroughbred out of a Clydesdale mare

WHEN it comes to cobs, Irish bloodlines do not always mean draught horses, however. Laura Bramall's Benvarden State Occasion (Quincy), who competed in the lightweight cob of the year final at HOYS 2022, was bred in Ireland and is by the Connemara pony stallion Midas Touch – a son of the esteemed Coral Prince – and out of a French-bred Normandy cob mare, Quirina Du Tertre.

"We bought two Normandy cob mares at three and four years old. They escaped out of their field early one year and we ended up having two foals. The next year the breeding was a little more planned, and Quincy was the result of that," says breeder Finola Mulholland, who sold him as a three-year-old.

> *"They're chunky and strong willed. Anything they can't go over, they'd go through"*
>
> FINOLA MULHOLLAND ON HER NORMANDY COB MARES

The Normandy cob is relatively unknown outside France, but this heritage breed has been shown to be incredibly versatile, with great stamina and good paces, with a deep frame and naturally muscular build.

"They're chunky, strong-willed mares – anything they can't go over, they'd go through," says Finola. "Quincy was always a leaner type, though, more sporty, like his dad. He was always a nice young horse."

STEP outside the world of hogged show cobs and the traditional Irish cob comes to the fore. Originally bred by Romany gypsies to pull their caravans, these amenable little horses have enjoyed a surge in popularity in recent years and have proved their ability to turn their hooves to all sorts of disciplines, from dressage to eventing and hunting.

There are a great many cobs, many traditional Irish, others Welsh, who have taken successfully to dressage, among them Cuffstown Rumble, who reached grand prix with Samantha Turner. But before "hairies" became a more common sight at dressage shows – now with their own affiliated championship each year – there were just a handful breaking the mould.

One of the "original" dressage cobs is Sound Barrier. Now 25 and still going strong, the coloured gelding known as Bill competed up to small tour level with Victoria Strutton, winning an Area Festival prix st georges title in 2013.

Bill's sire was a heavyweight Irish cob, while his dam was a Hackney, and Victoria acquired him from a local traveller community.

"The travellers were using Hackneys at the time, to put more blood into their horses," says Victoria. "Bill had been broken in as a driving pony, but had become terrified of going backwards. I didn't really know what to do with him, and I'd never tried dressage, until we found Douglas Hibbert as our trainer.

Pictures by Alamy and Lucy Merrell

Irish cob/Hackney, Sound Barrier (above) competed up to small tour level with Victoria Strutton; Vicky Smith's champion cob Bling Cobsby has Irish Draught lines mixed with warmblood (right), and maxi cob winner Clantara Shadow Play (below) is by thoroughbred Bollin Terry, out of a Percheron

"Bill always had a bit of knee action from his Hackney side, which made him quite expressive in his changes and in canter pirouettes, once he learnt to sit and bring the front end up," says Victoria.

"We struggled with the medium and extended trot as he would come up through the knee and not out through the shoulder, but piaffe work helped free up his shoulders and that was when he found his better trot.

"He was an example of a cob who could never have the movement of a warmblood, but was doing more than physically he should be able to. He had the heart of a lion and taught me that if you get a good cob onside, they will walk through fire for you."

The pair were training at inter I and looking ahead to grand prix when Bill, aged 18, injured a tendon, putting paid to his dressage career. Nowadays, he does a bit of showing and equitation classes and lots of hacking.

"Bill would always be the only cob in our dressage classes, and often the only coloured, too, but now we're seeing cobs competing right up to grand prix," says Victoria.

MANY cobs boast heavy horse lines, including the famous eventer Mulrys Error, who jumped double clear round Badminton Horse Trials in 2016 with Ben Hobday, and was thereafter dubbed the "supercob".

"Mulry's dam was a Clydesdale mare, with a white face and feathers and big flat feet, although she wasn't all that big," remembers his owner Sallie Ryle, who bought the gelding as a youngster from Peter Houlston, who had in turn acquired him at Ballinasloe Fair from Mark Mulry, friend of the breeder Michael Fallon.

"His father was a black-type thoroughbred, a miler called Eve's Error. He won a lot of money racing abroad before retiring to stud in Ireland and ended up having a night of passion with this unpapered Clydesdale mare."

The mare went on to have 13 foals in total, Mulrys Error being the first. Sallie now owns a half-brother, Brother Bridie, out of the same mare, by an Irish Sport Horse.

"He is much chunkier than Mulry, a weight-carrying hunting cob. But he's got Mulry's jump, so that must have come from the mare," she says. "Then we have another cob from Mark Mulry, called Tik Tok Teddy, whose father was a Clydesdale and mother was a thoroughbred. He is as quiet as a lamb at home, but the thoroughbred brain comes out when he events and he can really shift, like Mulry.

"Bridie on the other hand is slow – you can tell there's no thoroughbred in him – but he has so much stamina and will go all day, and that's the Clydesdale. Mulry of course has both speed and stamina."

Heavy horses pop up in the breeding of show cobs, too; Pattern Master, fourth at HOYS this year and supreme at the British Show Horse Association championships in 2021 with Jordan Cook, is by Colony Vern, a Suffolk stallion.

Then there's Robin Bartolomy's Royal International winning maxi Clantara Shadow Play (Sage), who is out of a Percheron mare and by the thoroughbred Bollin Terry, whose sire Terimon was second in the Epsom Derby in 1989.

"Bollin Terry is quite a small stallion and while Sage is without a doubt a heavy horse, his sire gave him his lovely movement," says Robin, who found Sage in Scotland as an unbroken three-year-old. "On viewing him, we shooed him around the field and he jumped a five-bar gate to get back to his mother."

One thing is for certain – breeding a cob is, as Val Sheehan puts it, "a real lottery".

> *"More often than not, good cobs are found, not bred"*
>
> VAL SHEEHAN

"You find a good cob, you don't breed one," he says. "Some people have tried and have been lucky and got it right, but more often than not, good cobs are found, not bred. And that's why good cobs are in such demand – quality ones are becoming harder to find, partly because we see fewer of those good old-fashioned Irish mares now.

"But a cob is always type, however it's made, and we must never forget that." **H&H**

Pictures by Hoof Prints, Gill Kapadia and Lucy Merrell

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A cob's weight and shape can fluctuate more than those of other types due to workload, age or the seasons, so be sure to check saddle fit regularly

Kitting out the cob

As versatile and sturdy as cobs are, they do have their challenges. *Stephanie Bateman* explores the difficulties cob owners face when it comes to finding the right kit and essentials

SUREFOOTED, weight-carrying and steady, cobs are known for being great all-rounders who can turn their hooves to a variety of things, and will happily carry most members of the family. They're generally good-doers who can live in or out and have pretty good feet, but due to their rotund shape, it can be tricky to find kit for them.

"Cobs are great fun and often have lovely personalities, but they also tend to have big bodies on short legs," says producer and judge Kate Nicholson, who was ride judge of the open cob section at Royal Windsor last year. "Cobs have plenty of bone but short cannon bones, and many brushing boots are too long for them or too narrow. Their big shoulders and round, short backs mean that saddles and rugs can move or slip, but I've found that straight-cut showing saddles tend to suit them as they sit behind their shoulder. Rugs need to allow plenty of room around the shoulders as many cobs have flamboyant movement."

Qualified saddle fitter Nigel Bexon agrees it can be difficult finding saddles to fit cobs.

"Cobs come in a variety of different types; short flat-backed, short sway-backed, rotund from front to back, rotund at the rear but with a wither, and can be quite narrow," he says. "This can cause a saddle fitter a few problems, and it all starts with the correct tree. From there, the style of the panels should mirror the shape of the horse's saddle fitting area."

For a very round cob, using a slimmer panel can help stabilise the saddle.

"This would prevent the saddle from being perched on top of the horse and becoming unstable, causing the saddle to roll," says Nigel. "We would also use short points to allow a good range of shoulder movement and prevent the saddle from sitting too high."

For a cob with a high wither, the shape of the panel at the front of the saddle may need to differ from the shape at the back of the saddle.

"We achieve this by using panels with extra inserts that reflect the shape of the horse," says Nigel. "This allows your saddle fitter to get the correct balance by adjusting with wool flock or the use of shims."

Right: fitting a bridle to a cob can be tricky. On the left, the browband is too tight, pulling the headpiece towards the ears. The noseband cheeks are too close so the straps sit on top of the facial crest, while the cheekpieces are too long so give little adjustability. The bridle on the right is a better fit, with a bigger browband and noseband, and wider straps to suit the horse

Pictures by Sophie Cheeseman and Kelly Jones

Your saddle fitter can advise on the best girth type and position, and the best girth straps, to fit a cob's shape

There also needs to be adequate clearance for the horse's spine.

"Cob weight and body shape can change according to workload, seasons and age more than other breeds, so their saddle will need to be checked every six months," advises Nigel. "Your saddle fitter should also talk to you about the use of a correct girth, girth position and the best girth straps to prevent saddle movement."

BRIDLE fit can also be tricky for cob owners. The classic "cob" size no longer caters for the wide variety of shapes and sizes of today's cob.

"You can have delicate Welsh cob heads all the way up to your enormous maxi cobs with huge Roman noses, so the requirements are individual," says bespoke master bridle-maker Kelly Jones. "A common issue is the width of the cob's nose – a conventional 'cob' size noseband is often too tight. Also, the headpiece and browbands are usually too small by a good few inches, but when you go to the next bridle size up, some parts are too big, such as the cheekpieces being too long."

Kelly says that proportion is another key element in fitting cob bridles.

"The width of the leather is really important. You wouldn't want a giant cob with

"Finding a saddle was tricky"

KATIE GILMOUR owns 11-year-old, 13.2hh mini cob Clover, who "is a nightmare to fit tack to".

"When I took my daughter to try her, her saddle was slipping all over the place, so we tried her bareback," says Katie. "She was everything we dreamed she could be, so we bought her.

"Being a cob, she has a deep neck, big shoulders, a deep girth and a fairly short back. Finding a saddle to fit was tricky. She came with a saddle that I returned as the fit wasn't good. My saddler, Karen Jones, fitted a Wintec, but it was a bit big for my daughter. Eventually, we fitted an old Bates pony dressage saddle, which has been great. We've had to change the gullet a few times as she's gotten fit and lost weight, but the saddle really suits her and my children.

"Generally, rugs that fit her shoulders are down to her fetlocks. I've had to experiment with brands, but I've found Ruggles and Pessoa to be very good."

a large nose to be wearing a delicate, thin noseband," she says. "It would also look silly having half-inch cheekpieces on a cob bridle, so it's about finding the right proportions.

"Cobs can also be quite strong, but instead of going for a stronger bit, riders could try a different noseband instead, such as a grackle, which lifts the head, or a drop noseband, but again, they will probably find it difficult to find one to fit. I make cob bridles with wider straps so it looks in proportion.

"The problem is that owners can't usually buy individual bridle pieces off the shelf, unless it's bespoke, and then it becomes expensive," she says. "Bridle manufacturers really need to start offering bridles in separate parts to offer the flexibility that owners need."

> *"Being 'stockier' is not an excuse to have an overweight cob"*
>
> DONNA CASE

"Maintaining a cob is difficult and expensive"

CHARLOTTE WARREN owns Brian, a 14-year-old, 15.1hh heavyweight show cob who has "huge shoulders and a massive, thick neck".

"He's only 15.1hh but takes 6ft 6in – 6ft 9in rugs due to the width of him," says Charlotte. "He has a gigantic head so I have had to build a bridle piece by piece so that it fits.

"He has a lot of bone but not a lot of length, so fitting brushing boots is almost impossible. Woof Wear medium extra wide are the only ones I've found to be any good, and he wears size XXL overreach boots."

IN general, cobs tend to maintain weight well, and their diet should reflect this.

"The first step with any cob is to look at their body condition score (BCS)," says independent nutritionist Donna Case of the Horse Feed Guru. "From here you can decide if you need to increase, decrease, or maintain the calorific intake."

With cobs, it's easy to become blind to them carrying too much fat and attribute it to their type.

"Being 'stockier' is not an excuse to have an overweight cob," says Donna. "When you see gutters forming through the loins, cresty necks, fleshy tailheads, palpable fat through the withers, shoulders and ribs, this is an overweight horse – being a cob is no excuse."

Donna advises starting with assessing the forage content.

"Ensure you are adapting the amount throughout the year in line with the grazing available," she says. "Spread forage rations out through the use of small-holed nets fed more regularly, and never let your cob go for longer than four hours without forage. Weigh the forage so you're in control of the amount, and you may need to look at ways to restrict grass consumption, too, such as muzzling, strip grazing and track systems."

On top of this, Donna suggests a small amount of chaff and a balancer to supply the necessary vitamins, minerals and quality protein in a low-calorie format.

"If you feel your cob needs more energy, but you are also having to weight-watch, be cautious as calories are energy," she adds. "Helping your cob lose weight could give him more energy."

Cobs tend to maintain weight well, so start with an assessement of body condition and then ascertain the ideal type and size of feed ration

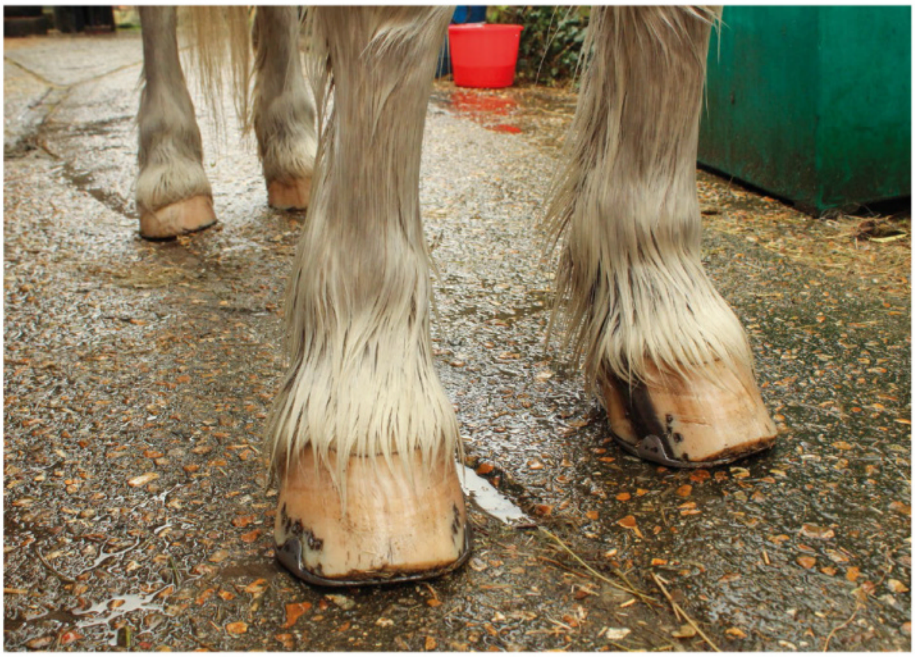
A cob with quirks

CAROL QUANTRILL owns 15-year-old, 15.3hh maxi cob Cormoy Lad, aka Hugo, whom she competes in dressage.

"Everyone thinks a cob will be easy, but getting stuff to fit them can be a nightmare," she says. "Hugo has uber-sensitive skin, he struggles with mud fever and is allergic to neoprene.

"He has a huge chest and rugs are a headache, but I have a good selection of Premier Equine rugs, which fit without rubbing. I have a great saddler and have luckily found tack that fits like a dream.

"I travel Hugo in a trailer, but have taken the partition out to give him more room."

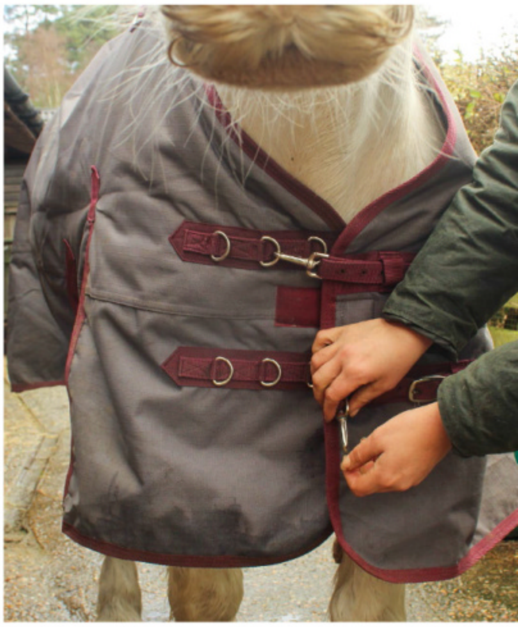


Hoof-wise, cobs tend to have pretty solid feet with thick walls and good quality hoof.

"Most, depending on their jobs, can usually go without shoes or only need to be shod in front," says farrier Jack Climo. "They are normally good doers, so are more susceptible to being overweight than other types, and they can be more predisposed to laminitis.

"Because they are a heavier type, they tend to have a choppier action and are more likely to develop arthritic changes such as ringbone and sidebone, and suffer more concussive issues. Owners should consider this when working them.

"Another plus is that cobs are usually quiet and calm to shoe, but they can also be quite thuggy and push you around if they're not managed correctly." **H&H**



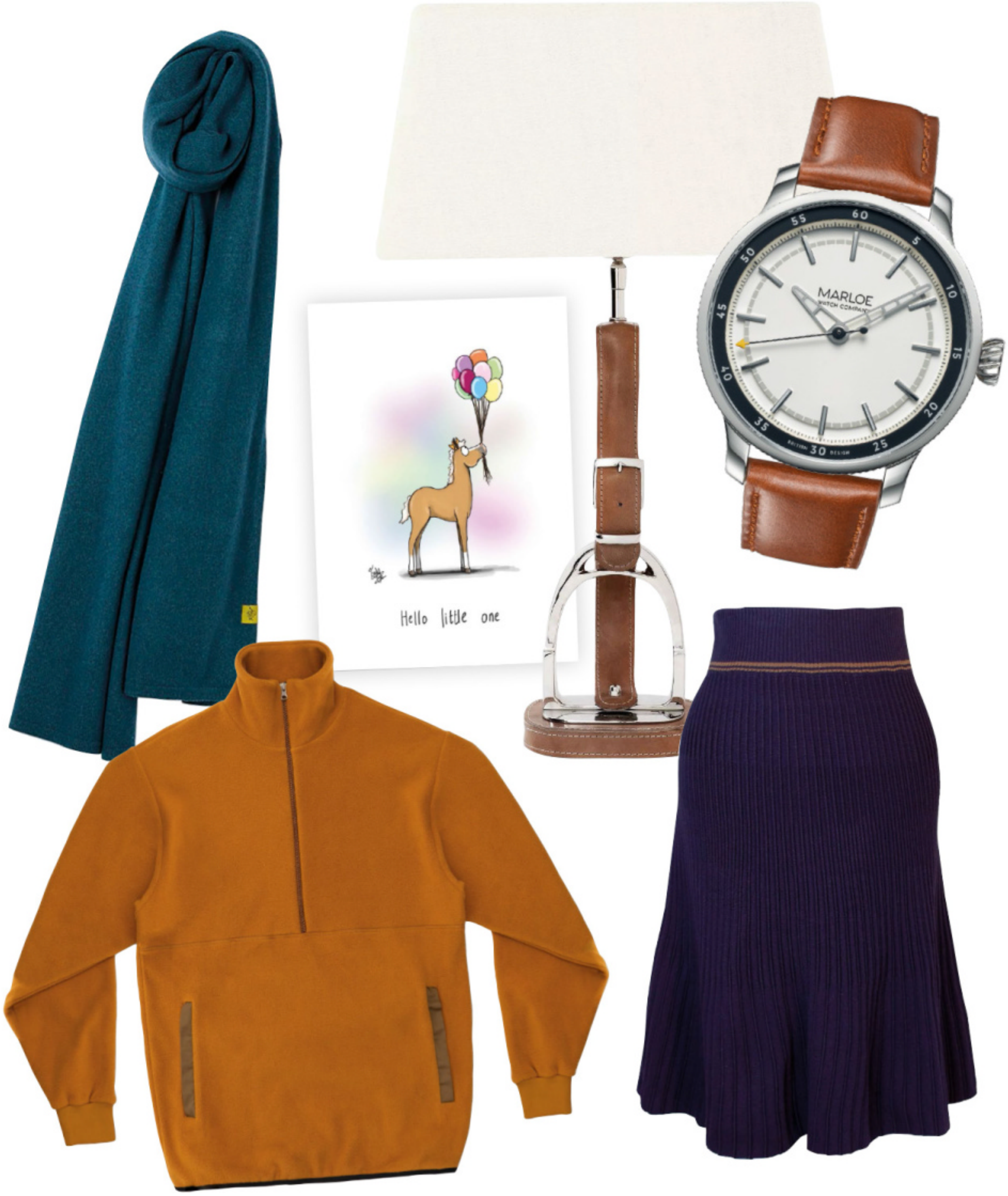
Top: short cannons with plenty of bone can mean brushing boots are either too long or too narrow. Right: with typically big shoulders and broad chests, cobs need rugs with ample room in front

"They have made-to-measure bridles"

ALICE CLARK owns two cobs: Billy, a 13-year-old, 14.2hh traditional Blagdon cob, and Annie, a seven-year-old coloured rescue cob. Both horses enjoy lots of hacking and fun rides.

"Finding bridles that correctly fit my cobs was tricky," says Alice. "They both had bridles that were a combination of both cob and pony sizes, but I then made the decision to get made-to-measure bridles to make sure they were both as comfortable as possible.

"I have also found it difficult to find saddles for the two of them. Billy is quite short-backed, but he is also very wide with big shoulders. I was recommended Sue Carson Saddles and managed to find Billy the perfect saddle. Annie wears an Easytrek Saddle, which is a fully adjustable treeless saddle that moulds to her shape."



Beyond the yard

January shouldn't be all about denial, so feast your eyes on these lovely treats

Clockwise from top left

MERINO WOOL WRAP IN TEAL, Life Of Riley, £99, **lifeofrileyonline.co.uk**
HELLO LITTLE ONE CARD, Emily Cole Illustrations, £2.95, **emilycole.com**
OLYMPIA EQUESTRIAN TABLE LAMP, Eichholtz, £505, **pavilionbroadway.co.uk**
CONISTON AUTO K4 WATCH, Marloe Watch Company, £349, **marloewatchcompany.com**
WIMBLEDON LONGLINE SKIRT, Waring Brooke, £165, **waringbrooke.com**
BURNT YELLOW COCOON FLEECE, Livrae, £80, **livrae.co.uk**

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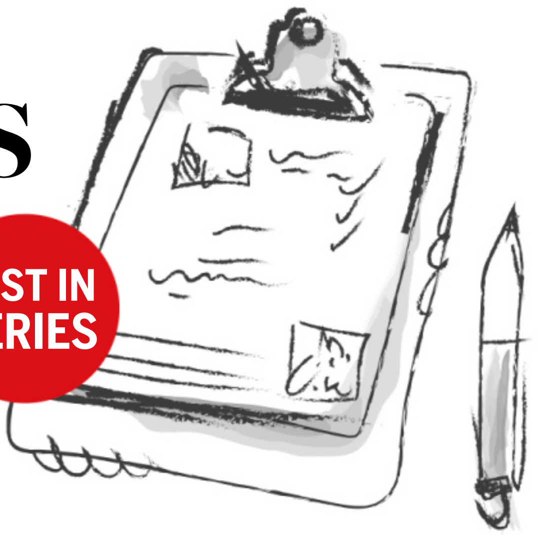
First tiny steps

Vet *Kieran O'Brien* has to call on his breadth of experience in farm animals as a long-awaited but unusual foaling veers off script



LAST IN SERIES

TO be called to a foaling mare in the late afternoon is unusual. Most mares foal in the dark, presumably a practice that evolved in their primitive ancestors as a defence against attacks by predators, when both the mare and the foal are at their most vulnerable. Similarly, the necessity to move away quickly from the place where the mare has foaled has resulted in the remarkable innate drive of the newborn foal to stand quickly. Hence the "1-2-3 rule", well known to stud managers, determines if the foal is normal – an hour to stand, two hours to suck, and three hours for the mare to pass the placenta.

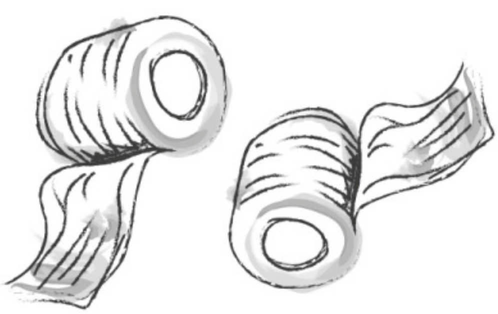
On my arrival, the mare is lying on her side in a straw-bedded stable, attended by a very anxious owner and her children.

"How long has she been pushing for?" I ask.

"About an hour," the owner replies, "but all we can see is a foot and a nose."

Persuading the mare to stand, I wrap her tail in a clean bandage and carefully wash her vulva in antiseptic soap. I then similarly wash my arms and hands. She is restless and clearly wants to lie down again. I give her a quick-acting sedative intravenously, which will help to keep her standing. Any sort of obstetrical manipulation is very much easier in a standing mare, as the abdominal contents are not pressing against the foal, greatly inhibiting any sort of manipulation.

Inserting my lubricated arm into her vagina I first make contact with what is unmistakably a small muzzle and a small foot under its chin. Moving my hand further into the mare past the foal's head to find the other foot. I have an unusual surprise. I could feel another tiny muzzle with another pair of ears. Twins!



TWINNING is very unusual. Although twin ovulations resulting in two fertilised very early embryos are quite common, one of these embryos is usually naturally "deleted" quite early in the pregnancy, leaving a single viable foal behind.

The mare's uterus seems to have difficulty sustaining and growing twin foals. If both go on to develop further, it is common for them both to be suddenly aborted in mid- to late-pregnancy – a huge disappointment for the owner.

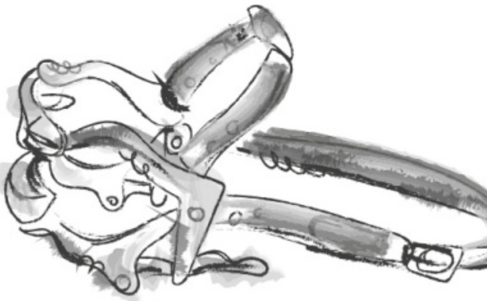
Much of the effort we put into scanning mares early in pregnancy is to detect twins. We can see them as early as 15 days after mating, and if detected at that stage, it is usually possible to "pinch" one without damaging the other, to ensure the survival of the remaining single foetus.

But some twins are carried to full term. When this happens, they are often born small, although if they are of equal size they may survive with careful nursing. Foaling difficulties occur if they are both – as has happened in this case – pushed into the birth canal at the same time.

Scanning early in pregnancy is to a large extent to detect if twins are being carried, as mares often struggle to produce two healthy foals

Kieran O'Brien is an equine vet who lives on the Devon-Cornwall border, with his breeding herd of Connemara jumping ponies

Pictures by Alamy and Kieran O'Brien, illustrations by Wild Country Creative



On the rare occasion when a mare successfully carries twins to full term and they are of equal size, they will need careful nursing in their first days and months

THE natural delivery position for foals is for both forelegs to be extended and the foal's head to rest on the cannon bones. This creates a "cone" shape, which makes the foal's passage through the circular hard bony pelvis as easy as possible. So the second foal must be pushed further back into the mare to allow me to straighten both forelimbs of the first foal and deliver it. This I achieve without too much difficulty and carefully extract the foal, supporting it as it drops to the ground. We watch for the foal to breathe and move its head – nothing. I feel through its little chest for a heartbeat. The tell-tale flutter under my fingers isn't there. It is stillborn.

> *"I feel through its little chest for a heartbeat, but the tell-tale flutter under my fingers isn't there"*

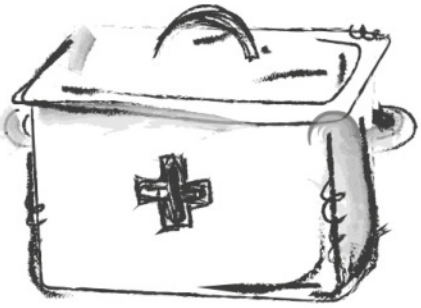
If the second foal is to have any chance of surviving it must be delivered as quickly as possible. Reaching deep into the mare I can feel its little forelimb and its head. Sliding my hand along the foal's chest I search in vain for the other forelimb. I can feel the elbow, but the rest of the limb is extended backwards alongside its body and out of reach. No matter how hard I try I cannot bring it forward.

But then I remember something from my student days lambing ewes. Sometimes in the case of twins or triplets, because they were very small, we could deliver them without extending the missing foreleg. I had never tried that in a mare but then this was the only pair of twin full-term foals I had encountered. I resolve to try it.

Applying plenty of obstetrical lubricant all around the foal, I apply gentle traction to the single extended forelimb and to the head. At first, there is quite a bit of resistance, but then it gradually starts to move. Once the shoulders are through the hard bony pelvic ring the rest of the foal comes out easily. The mare owner and I gently lower it to the floor.

But is it alive? It lies unmoving for a second as we watch hopefully. Then there is a slight movement of the head, a wiggle of the ears, and it starts breathing. Success! I have saved one. A filly with four white socks. We stand back and watch while her mother licks her and gives that soft whinny that is only ever heard when a mare speaks to her newborn. The foal is small and, like all twins, it will take careful nursing if it is to survive. Its journey has only just begun. **H&H**

● ***Some details have been changed to preserve client confidentiality***



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Branching out for growth

Is it possible to make money out of your equestrian facilities beyond your main earnings? *Alex Robinson* weighs up the options

WITH the cost of living crisis in full swing, there couldn't be a better time to take stock of your current inventory and ask what could be done to increase your income.

First for any yard owner is assessing what facilities currently in place could be useful to other equestrians. Your riding school may have spare stables that could be liveried out, your arena might lend itself to training clinics or hire-by-the-hour services or your spare land might be suitable for a variety of uses.

While brainstorming the opportunities at your fingertips, it's also essential to consider what wouldn't be a suitable venture.

"We don't encourage yard owners to pursue offering beach rides and trekking; they pose an increased risk to rider safety and therefore underwriters can have concerns around insuring them," explains KBIS executive director Lawrence Gill. "These activities also fall under the 2018 Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Act, meaning the yard owner would have to hold a licence to carry out these activities."

Rosie Pope from SEIB also advises that insurers will be cautious of any new venture and will want details of qualifications, industry experience and whether you are going to be using your horses to interact with the public.

"If a council licence is required, this will also need to be in place, alongside sufficient risk assessments," she adds. "It's the business owner's responsibility to check with their local council as to what type of licence they might require to operate. Before making a large investment or leap into a new venture, it is always worth checking if you can get cover and at what sort of price."

SCALING UP

GREENLANDS EQUESTRIAN in Cumbria is one of the north-west's most extensive equestrian centres, offering a range of services, including venue and facility hire, livery, a cafe and tack shop. It hosts regular competitions, making use of the two indoor arenas, the international-sized outdoor arena and cross-country course.

Mandy Wilson moved to the former arable farm in 1991. She initially constructed six sandstone stables after sourcing a diversification grant, so that she could produce an income from home while she raised her children.

"We now have around 90 stables," says Mandy, who runs the centre with her daughter.

"We offer part, full and DIY livery, as well as overnight stables for people competing at the centre."

Six years ago, the international arena was constructed.

"Our business rates had doubled overnight, so we made the decision to do something big or we risked closure," Mandy explains. "Business rates are one of our biggest costs, as for most equestrian centres, as well as electricity. We have a turbine installed, which goes some way to reducing the electricity bill, but it's still our biggest overhead.

"It's scary running a big centre. As we're not located near a big city, we don't have the population. Consequently, we run all season, seven days a week. But even after 31 years, we're always looking for new things to offer competitors. In 2023, we hope to have a Royal International working hunter qualifier at one of our shows."

Lawrence adds: "If looking to host competitions, public liability insurance is a must-have. Employers' liability should also be considered if there are volunteers, helpers or employees. Personal accident insurance can be considered for volunteers,

Pictures by Getty Images and Alamy

Hiring out your horsebox, with the right insurance, is not without potential issues

along with insuring against cancellation and abandonment of events.

"The cover needed for different disciplines and levels doesn't really change, but with an increased risk there may be an increased cost. Not having suitable health and safety processes and risk management in place could prevent underwriters from offering insurance for competitions."

EXTRA BENEFITS

WORKING hunter specialist Katy Green installed a 45x80m arena at her yard in Warwickshire last year. She opted for a wax surface for maintenance reasons and she has full sets of working hunter and show jumps.

"It's an extra asset to the yard, although my main plan was to use it to enhance my teaching; I now have better training facilities to do my job," explains Katy.

She also has five permanent liveries with her, as well as a rotation of schooling liveries.

"I can now have more horses in for schooling as I have direct access to a school rather than needing to hire out a venue," she says.

"People have also used the arena to film sales videos, as they're able to showcase their horses over a decent course of jumps in a private setting. We have companies sponsoring the jumps in return for advertising. I'm also getting a lot out of it while working with my own horses."

If you have a horsebox sitting in your driveway, you might also consider hiring it out for days or weeks at a time. However, this can be fraught with problems, so go in forewarned.

"Speak to your motor insurer to find out how much it would cost to add cover for self-drive hire. Similarly, if hiring out a trailer, make sure your insurer is aware that the trailer is being hired out," Lawrence advises. "Third-party public liability insurance would protect you in the event a third party is injured or their property damaged as a result of the hiring of the vehicle."

Bear in mind, as when lending or hiring out anything, that your horsebox may be damaged by the hirer's horses or a driving incident.

SOMETHING SPECIAL

THE Craven Country Ride, located on Pot Haw Farm, a beef and sheep farm in Skipton, is an established off-road riding venue that makes use of 600 acres of land to offer farm rides, trail days and cross-country training. After their hack, riders can snack on home-made ginger biscuits in Pot Haw's on-site customer kitchen, and the owners, the Coates, also produce haylage and run a campsite.

"My father came to the farm in 1974 and my wife and I took over in 2005," explains David Coates, who used to showjump and rode as a point-to-point jockey for 30 seasons.

"After foot-and-mouth, I was looking to do something new that was financially viable but also incorporated my passion for horses. I also wanted a venture that would utilise the land we had available."

> *"I've learnt you have to work with what you've got"*
> DAVID COATES

The Craven Country Ride is certainly special, as David has made the most of what the countryside has to offer.

"We have four water features, paths through woodland and we incorporate the route around the hills, known as drumlins, which were left from the Ice Age," explains David, whose son will take over the operation in the future. "This summer, I constructed a viewpoint on the highest point of the land, which has been well received. We run throughout the summer, but we're constantly moving the course and flags to give the land time to rest and the customers have somewhere new to ride. I've learnt that you have to work with what you've got; you can't try to do something if your infrastructure won't allow it.

"You can't underestimate the commitment that goes into it. You can't just put a course up at the start of the season and forget about it," David continues. "We're constantly repairing and refreshing things. In the early days, we didn't have a consistent flow of customers but I believed in what we were doing. We keep the on-site facilities immaculate, too. It's the little extras that go a long way.

"Ensuring you have an insurance policy in place before you start is essential, and you must make sure that you get consent from the landowner if you plan to diversify on land that you don't own. We have an agricultural tenancy and thankfully our landowner is supportive." **H&H**

Greenlands Equestrian is an example of an extensive centre making the most of its facilities. Investing in an arena and jumps can provide potential for more clients

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Masters of hunting hospitality

The second part of Will Cursham's Dutch hunting odyssey takes him to the Midland, where a good evening hunt ends in a surprising ritual

By WILL CURSHAM

CAN hunting get any more hospitable than this? This question struck me as I walked into the grounds of the Witte Kasteel, Loon op Zand, a village in the centre of the Netherlands, just to the north of Tilburg. The Midland Hunt, one of six packs in the country, was soon to meet here. It looked like a party was about to begin; tables were laid, drinks were being poured and food was cooking. A group of sonneurs (French horn players), dressed in smart blue uniforms, was warming up. Members and supporters were drifting in, dressed in tweed jackets.

In the Netherlands, every subscriber has to organise at least one meet, and everyone wants to put on a good spread when it comes to their turn. Today was going to be a particular treat because the organisers were Dutch master chef Riny van den Oord, his wife Annette and their daughter Valerie. All are members of the Midland, and as well as being organiser, Riny was going to serve up some fun as field master.

The place was soon heaving with people, and one of the first I met was Dolf Straatman, a member of the Midland since 1990, who filled me in on the history of the hunt.

> *"This has made for lighter hounds, and they can hunt for 25km now, no problem"*
>
> LEONTINE VAN HAAREN ON THE HOUND BREEDING BY HER HUSBAND, HUNTSMAN DICK VAN HAAREN

"The Midland Hunt was established in 1986 by Barend van Dipten," he explained. "He started with eight bloodhounds from England. His daughter, Leontine still hunts with us, and his son-in-law, Dick van Haaren, is our joint-master and huntsman."

Leontine and Dick joined us and Leontine took up the story: "I have been hunting with them since the beginning, since 1986. I remember that when I moved out of the house to marry Dick, the bloodhounds moved in!"

DEEP, BAYING VOICES

THE Midland is known as a pack of bloodhounds, but as with so many other packs, they are not actually pure-bred.

"When he became huntsman, Dick wanted a lot more power and speed," explained Leontine. "Bloodhounds can go 15km but then they are done. With the help of Frank [Teunissen, huntsman of the neighbouring Soestdijk], we introduced Kerry Beagle blood from the Scarteen. Dick also used a French hound, a Bleu de Gascogne bitch. This has made for lighter hounds, and they can hunt for 25km now, no problem."

The Midland hounds still look like bloodhounds, and they made an impressive sight as they poured out of the hunt lorry, all of them signalling their enthusiasm with their deep, baying voices. This was the cue for mounted followers to tear themselves away from the hospitality and get on their horses. I followed hunt vice-chairman Jessy Brouwers, who was lending me her lovely Irish Draught Zorro. Jessy, a psychologist by profession, is one of those hunting heroines who do everything on their own, including turning out Zorro beautifully, as well as her handsome youngster Darwin.

Since the socialising had already been done, the meet itself was more like a warm-up ring, with riders trotting and cantering their horses. Some looked like they could go straight into a dressage arena, particularly Valerie van den Oord. Valerie events to CCI3* level and together with her father Riny (who still events to CCI2* level at the age of 58), they make something of a dream team. One of their success stories is Bouncer, who won the Dutch National Eventing Championships at Boekolo last year with Janneke Boonzaaijer.

"We bought him as a five-year-old from Max Schep, as a hunting horse," recounted Valerie. "People thought he was too big. My dad rode him to CCI*. Then he injured his knee and I took over and rode him to CCI3*. Then

IN KENNELS

Master: Joint-masters: Dick van Haaren, Ad van der Zanden, Albert Hoogenboom
Huntsman: Dick van Haaren
Whippers-in: Ellen Janssen, André Olthof, Leontine van Haaren
Field master: Riny van den Oord
Kennels: Berg en Dal, near Nijmegen
Days: Saturdays/Sundays and alternate Wednesdays
Website: midlandhunt.nl

Joint-master and huntsman Dick van Haaren with hounds at the end of the day

Slip-trekker Herman van Gils lays the drag. He has done so for the Midland for the past five years

Jessy Brouwers – a "hunt heroine" who does all her own and her horses' preparation and turnout – and Do Visser enjoy their day

The Midland pack is known as bloodhounds, but breeding with Kerry Beagle and Bleu de Gascoigne blood has brought speed and stamina

Field master Riny van den Oord – who also events to CCI2* level – takes a ditch in style

Pictures by Wim Barelds

The field waits with anticipation at the meet

owners bought him for Janneke Boonzaaijer, who won the Dutch Eventing Championships at Boekolo in 2022."

Most of the horses out today were Irish, many bought from Max Schep and his wife Rebecca. Max is a member of the Soestdijk hunt but, like all dealers, hunts everywhere he can. He buys horses from all over Ireland.

One person who had already left the meet was the slip-trekker (drag-layer) Herman van Gils. Most bloodhound packs hunt the clean boot, but the Midland use a drag.

"We use cow stomach as scent. We put it in a bucket with water for three days, and then drag it at the end of a rope off a horse," explained Herman, who is an expert in the art of being hunted, having been the quarry for the Ma'goy bloodhounds on the Belgian border for 20 years, and slip-trekker with the Midland for the past five.

> *"On some of our days we have some really big ditches, and lots of them – sometimes up to 80"*
>
> FIELD MASTER RINY VAN DEN OORD

POLITICS AND WOLVES

THE scent of cow's stomach is clearly a strong one; after a short hack through the village, hounds roared off into the woods to the south, the field of nearly 50 in hot pursuit, dodging in and out of trees and popping the odd log that Riny and his team had prepared for us. Horses and riders had to be on their toes, not just to avoid the trees, but also to avoid falling into the canals that appear at the end of every ride.

After about half an hour, we broke out into more typical Dutch countryside, a flat landscape of woods and the odd village. The advantage of this open landscape is an unbroken view of hounds, who were hunting just in front of us. Now came the typical Dutch obstacle, the sloten (ditches), which the Dutch take at a canter or gallop. As the land gets wetter, the ditches fill with water, but at the moment they were relatively dry and so a little less imposing.

"Today is a nice day, we have a few ditches, but nothing too big. On some of our days we have some really big ones, and lots of them – sometimes up to 80," said Riny after we had jumped the first few. This made the day suitable for everyone, particularly families. Fiene Peters, 13, was going especially well, accompanied by her proud mother, Rosalie. Alfonse Notermans, who has been hunting with the Midland since 1999, was out with his son Xavier and daughter Celine.

On we went at a lovely pace, always just behind hounds, checking occasionally and popping ditch after ditch. It was all great fun, but I was reminded that Dutch hunting does have its challenges, from politics to wolves.

"My local council wants to forbid hunting, I don't know why, maybe they think we hunt animals, maybe they think it is cruel to the horses," said Jessy. "Also, recently there have been wolves in the area, and we have to cancel when they are around."

Food and drink is never far away in Dutch hunting, and after two hours on the go, we stopped for a "half-time" break at the Van de Wouw country store. Everyone got off their horses, hounds were put in a pen and we made our way into a large barn. There was beer, port, sherry and all manner of edible goodies.

It was a great chance to chat, and I fell into conversation with Lieutenant Colonel Jeroen Teunissen, an officer in the Dutch equivalent of the Household Cavalry, who has been officer in charge of the Escort of Honour for the Dutch Royal family. Coincidentally, the hunt's chairman, André Olthof, is a reserve officer in the same Escort of Honour.

We must have spent an hour eating, drinking and chatting, while grooms and followers held our horses outside. The rain began to pour down (for which, as an Englishman, I was squarely blamed), and so we eventually trooped out, got back on our horses and carried on hunting.

THE BEST OF THE DAY

SOME riders may have felt a little sluggish after the hospitality, but hounds were as enthusiastic as ever, once again roaring away as they hit the scent. It was now past 4pm, rain was coming down in sheets and the light was fading fast, but this was undoubtedly the best part of the day from a hunting point of view. Hounds hunted beautifully, their dark forms barely visible as darkness fell over the fields. We followed just behind them, jumping some big, deep ditches that looked bottomless in the gloom.

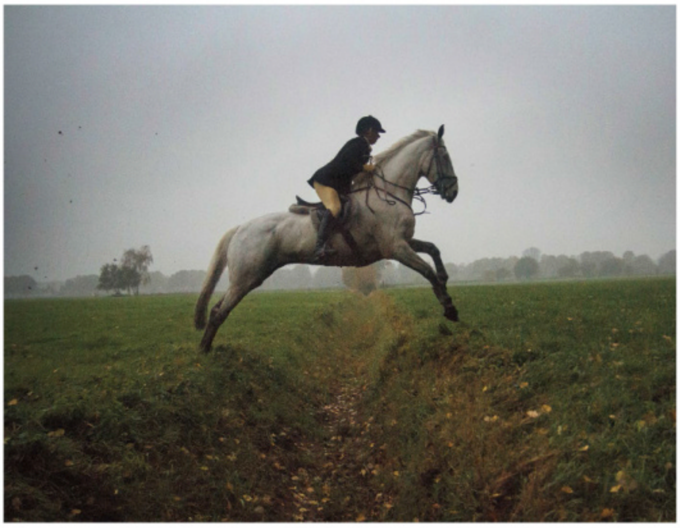
It felt for all the world like an old-fashioned English evening hunt, one of those days when hounds scream until the very end. When the pack eventually did finish the final line, it was almost dark, the silhouettes of hounds and hunt staff highlighted by the headlamps of the car followers.

There is a very specific ritual to the end of a day's hunting in Holland. After hacking back to the meet, hounds were presented with a huge bucket of cow's guts. Dick got off his horse and blew the "kill" as hounds tore up their treat. This harks back to "La Curée", the French tradition of presenting the quarry to the hounds, and it is etiquette for all mounted followers to stay on their horses while this happens, with the men taking off their hats as a mark of respect to huntsman and hounds.

The hounds having finished their treat, it was time for us to dismount, untack our horses and box them up. It had been nearly two hours since we last had sustenance, so off we went into the restaurant attached to the Witte Kasteel for a post-hunting catch-up. It was a fitting end to a hugely fun day, and left me in no doubt that the Dutch are masters of hunting hospitality. **H&H**

Yente Brynel and Annette van den Oord demonstrate the conviviality of the day

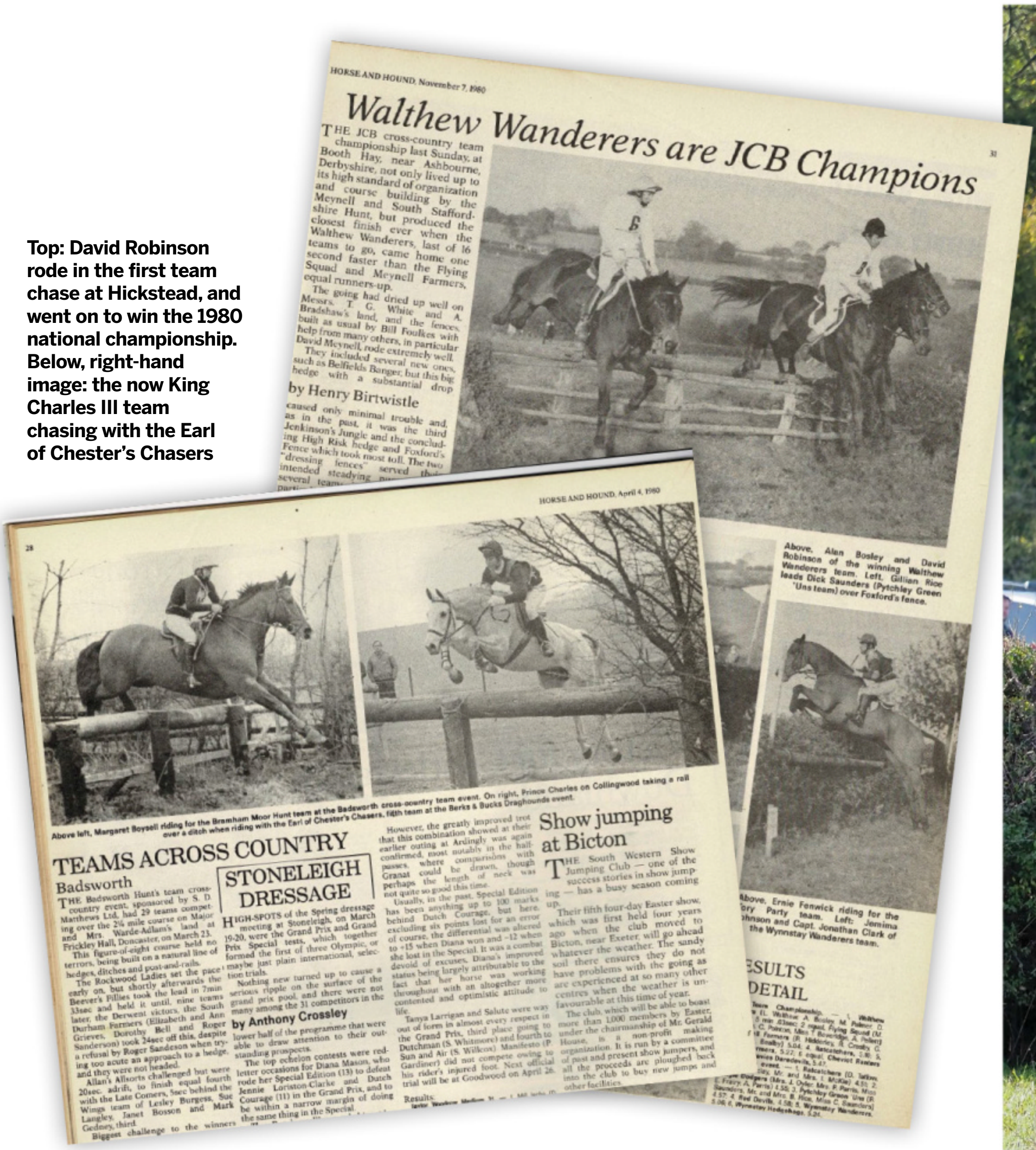
A group of French horn players, or "sonneurs" – complete with smart blue uniforms – warms up at the meet



Tackling the typical Dutch sloten, or ditch, which is taken at speed. Less imposing when dry, they fill with water as the land gets wetter

Riny van den Oord, a master chef who hosted the day as well as field mastering, pops a log

Top: David Robinson rode in the first team chase at Hickstead, and went on to win the 1980 national championship. Below, right-hand image: the now King Charles III team chasing with the Earl of Chester's Chasers



HORSE AND HOUND, November 7, 1980

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Walthew Wanderers are JCB Champions

THE JCB cross-country team championship last Sunday, at Booth Hay, near Ashbourne, Derbyshire, not only lived up to its high standard of organization and course building by the Meynell and South Staffordshire Hunt, but produced the closest finish ever when the Walthew Wanderers, last of 16 teams to go, came home one second faster than the Flying Squad and Meynell Farmers, equal runners-up.

The going had dried up well on Messrs. T. G. White and A. Bradshaw's land, and the fences, built as usual by Bill Foulkes with help from many others, in particular David Meynell, rode extremely well.

They included several new ones, such as Belfields Banger, but this big hedge with a substantial drop

by Henry Birtwistle

caused only minimal trouble and, as in the past, it was the third Jenkinson's Jungle and the concluding High Risk hedge and Foxford's Fence which took most toll. The two "dressing fences" served

Above, Alan Bosley and David Robinson of the winning Walthew Wanderers team. Left, Gillian Rice leads Dick Saunders (Pytchley Green 'Uns team) over Foxford's fence.

Above, Ernie Fenwick riding for the ory Party team. Left: Jemima hnson and Capt. Jonathan Clark of the Wynnstay Wanderers team.

ESULTS
DETAIL

HORSE AND HOUND, April 4, 1980

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Above left, Margaret Boysell riding for the Bramham Moor Hunt team at the Badsworth cross-country team event. On right, Prince Charles on Collingwood taking a rail over a ditch when riding with the Earl of Chester's Chasers, fifth team at the Berks & Bucks Draghounds event.

TEAMS ACROSS COUNTRY

Badsworth

THE Badsworth Hunt's team cross-country event, sponsored by S. D. Matthews Ltd, had 29 teams competing over the 2¼ mile course on Major and Mrs. Warde-Adlam's land at Frickley Hall, Doncaster, on March 23.

This figure-of-eight course held no terrors, being built on a natural line of hedges, ditches and post-and-rails.

The Rockwood Ladies set the pace early on, but shortly afterwards the Beever's Fillies took the lead in 7min 33sec and held it until, nine teams later, the Derwent victors, the South Durham Farmers (Elizabeth and Ann Grieves, Dorothy Bell and Roger Sanderson) took 24sec off this, despite a refusal by Roger Sandeson when trying too acute an approach to a hedge, and they were not headed.

Allan's Allsorts challenged but were 20sec. adrift, to finish equal fourth with the Late Comers, 5sec behind the Wings team of Lesley Burgess, Sue Langley, Janet Bosson and Mark Gedney, third.

Biggest challenge to the winners

STONELEIGH DRESSAGE

HIGH-SPOTS of the Spring dressage meeting at Stoneleigh, on March 19-20, were the Grand Prix and Grand Prix Special tests, which together formed the first of three Olympic, or maybe just plain international, selection trials.

Nothing new turned up to cause a serious ripple on the surface of the grand prix pool, and there were not many among the 31 competitors in the

by Anthony Crossley

lower half of the programme that were able to draw attention to their outstanding prospects.

The top echelon contests were red-letter occasions for Diana Mason, who rode her Special Edition (13) to defeat Jennie Loriston-Clarke and Dutch Courage (11) in the Grand Prix, and to be within a narrow margin of doing the same thing in the Special.

However, the greatly improved trot that this combination showed at their earlier outing at Ardingly was again confirmed, most notably in the half-passes, where comparisons with Granat could be drawn, though perhaps the length of neck was not quite so good this time.

Usually, in the past, Special Edition has been anything up to 100 marks behind Dutch Courage, but here, excluding six points lost for an error of course, the differential was altered to +15 when Diana won and -12 when she lost in the Special. It was a combat devoid of excuses, Diana's improved status being largely attributable to the fact that her horse was working throughout with an altogether more contented and optimistic attitude to life.

Tanya Larrigan and Salute were way out of form in almost every respect in the Grand Prix, third place going to Dutchman (S. Whitmore) and fourth to Sun and Air (S. Willcox). Manifesto (P. Gardiner) did not compete owing to his rider's injured foot. Next official trial will be at Goodwood on April 26.

Results:

Show jumping at Bicton

THE South Western Show Jumping Club — one of the success stories in show jumping — has a busy season coming up.

Their fifth four-day Easter show, which was first held four years ago when the club moved to Bicton, near Exeter, will go ahead whatever the weather. The sandy soil there ensures they do not have problems with the going as are experienced at so many other centres when the weather is unfavourable at this time of year.

The club, which will be able to boast more than 1,000 members by Easter, under the chairmanship of Mr. Gerald House, is a non-profit making organization. It is run by a committee of past and present show jumpers, and all the proceeds are ploughed back into the club to buy new jumps and other facilities.

Enduring team spirit

Team chasing is galloping towards its half century. *Jane Carley* looks at the sport's ongoing allure and how it is modernising to meet the needs of today's riders

ON the first properly wet day in autumn a hardy bunch of spectators stood in a muddy field in Suffolk watching a group of four horses weave backwards and forwards over stout hedges. There were gasps as they thundered over a road crossing – the second part with a 2m drop into the field below – and cheers as the team galloped away up the hill over more hedges.

It's a scene that the late Hickstead maestro Douglas Bunn would no doubt approve of, some 48 years after he created the first team chase at his famous Sussex showground.

The legend goes that the BBC wanted a different sort of equestrian entertainment for Easter Sunday's programming,

Yvonne Goss, "team boss" of the Fox Grant squad and now on the sport's national committee, believes that team chasing's accessibility is a big attraction

> *"It takes a season to work out your place on the team"*
>
> YVONNE GOSS

Picture by Paul Carley

and Douglas suggested pitting showjumpers, eventers, even dressage riders against his fellow subscribers from the Mid Surrey Drag to jump as teams around the hedges at Hickstead.

"Initially there were five in a team with four to count," recalls David Robinson, who rode at that first event. "Douglas cut and laid the hedges on his whole farm and put rails in to make jumps and it was a wonderful course. It set a precedent and more and more hunts developed 'team chase' courses that reflected their own country. To keep the connection, there was a trend for courses to have 'Hickstead rails', which were to be jumped upsides."

While many of the teams represented hunts, others were simply referred to as the "vets team" or "military team", with the quirkier names and sponsor prefixes a later addition, David points out.

The sport has continued to attract riders from other disciplines – showjumper Derek Ricketts, event rider Ginny Elliot, point-to-point rider Mike Felton and even King Charles appear in some of the early programmes and reports. Today's spectators are likely to spot Olympic gold medallist Tom McEwen and Badminton winner Piggy March, as well as showjumper and jockey Oisin Murphy.

"ALWAYS EXCITING"

TEAM CHASING has long had a reputation as one of the most convivial disciplines and David explains that this was partly born out of necessity.

"We travelled all over the country to compete, but before the M25 was built this meant very long journeys from the south-east, through central London. We would always stay near the event the night before, stabling our horses locally, which was the perfect excuse for a party."

Aside from the often lavish celebrations, many hosted by the sport's long-time sponsor and enthusiastic participant George Goring, David comments that the team spirit was the most addictive aspect.

"Everyone has a role – as the third rider, yours is the scoring time, so team-mates are always rooting for you and encouraging you along. The lack of rules and regulations made it more accessible and flexible than other sports. It was always exciting, from the day I started to the day I finished a decade or so ago."

Having been inspired by that first Hickstead team chase, Netty Nevill went on to be one of the sport's leading competitors and senior course inspector.

"By the 1980s novice classes were being introduced at some events, but there were still many enormous courses," she recalls. "My horse was only 15.1hh so having walked the Whaddon track and decided it was too big, we rerouted to the Meynell, which was also plenty big enough! Every course was different and there were some magnificent ones, but you needed b***s of steel!"

The sport's governing body, the Masters of Foxhounds Association

Netty Neville was among team chasing's leading competitors in the 1980s, when courses were "plenty big enough". She helped draw up consistent standards for the sport

(now the British Hound Sports Association), decreed that there should be more consistent standards between the courses and drew up a list of guidelines with the help of experienced competitors such as Netty.

"There had been some serious accidents and we took out some of the problem obstacles such as big open ditches," she recalls.

The accessibility of team chasing remains a big attraction, agrees Yvonne Goss, "team boss" of the Fox Grant squad, and course inspector Debbie Topping, team-mates in the legendary Forge Flyers, five-time national champions.

"We had a real mixture of horses. While a couple of us had thoroughbreds, Debbie's lead horse Junior was out of a Welsh Cob mare. It takes a season to work out your place in the team – I couldn't go past Junior on my horse Perry until we'd jumped the last fence or all hell broke loose!" says Yvonne, a new appointment to the sport's national committee.

AN INCLUSIVE ETHOS

WITH the unpredictability of four horses negotiating a track that twists and turns over varying terrain, sometimes a round that goes wrong can be as memorable as a winning one. Debbie recalls one Forge Flyer horse running out of control and jumping into host Rosie Vestey's garden at the Cotswold, and farmer Fred French of the Boring Gorings famously missed the turn in the pen at the Fernie and – appropriately – ended up in a barn.

But Yvonne points out that the sport requires good riding and a strong bond with your mount.

"It's not like eventing where you know you will have four strides to a certain fence. You have to be able to adapt to the situation unfolding in front of you and stay balanced."

While the schedule of novice and intermediate bogey and speed classes gives a programme of progression for those aiming at the open classes, Yvonne emphasises that riders need to be prepared for the sport.

"We started with fun rides, which along with hunting are the ideal way to get used to jumping in the open, in company with other horses. It's important that we don't make the novice courses too small – it's actually small fences that cause the most tip-ups."

"The sport has seen a gradual but important evolution to meet the needs of modern riders," Debbie comments. "But it's essential that we retain the same ethos – that everyone can aspire to progress from novice to the national championships, and that everyone competes on equal terms. What has never changed is that it's one of the most inclusive equestrian disciplines – everyone feels the same nerves and excitement on the start line, and everyone gets together at the prize-giving to celebrate or commiserate, whether they are just starting out or are national champions."

This has been the experience of Lea Pedro, who, along with her mother Tina, has become a team

Top left: course inspector Debbie Topping on part-Welsh cob Junior, as part of the Forge Flyers. Junior was adamant about his place in the team – pass him before the final fence at your peril! Top right: Lea Pedro and her mother Tina have found their team chasing tribe in the Beagling Rascals, and are now planning for and looking forward to opens. Left: expect the unexpected! The rounds in which nothing goes according to plan can be the most memorable. Undeterred, Team Ride-Away were still third at the Cotswold despite this drama.

Pictures by Picasa and Paul Carley

chasing convert this year.

"My mare Razzamatazz was bought to event but lacked scope in combinations, so we decided to try team chasing and found a place in a team via social media. Team chasing has developed her confidence so much; she was initially very excitable in the warm-up but as she has learned what to expect, has become more settled," she says.

The pair soon got to know other competitors and Lea says that they have now found their "tribe" with the Beagling Rascals.

"We asked to join them at the Bicester and just got on so well. We encouraged each other to step up to the intermediate at that event – we had some navigational issues but it was so much fun. One member does all the organising and brings a fabulous picnic and we all look after each other. The squad has grown and we have our own 'team strip' now."

Lea cites the friendly atmosphere as one of the best aspects of the sport and admits the adrenaline rush is addictive. So much so that she purchased a second horse from a team-mate at the start of the autumn season.

"We can't wait to do our first open, we're already planning for the spring."

LOOKING AHEAD

BRITISH TEAM CHASING'S national committee has recently established a number of sub-committees to combine the expertise of senior riders with event organisers, including a group led by vice-chairman Paul Scott to focus on course-building and safety.

Chairman Philip Cowen says: "There's no doubt we have seen some change in the sport, with an increased emphasis on course and fence safety. We also see a lot more ex-racehorses at all levels, which has put more of an emphasis on speed. But it's important to keep the sport's original spirit, operating to established standards without excessive regulation."

All affiliated team chases are run by hunt packs, and Philip points out that while the organisation of such an event requires a competent, fully engaged team, they offer a good source of income for the hunt.

He cites the dramatic growth of team chasing – entries to the Essex and Suffolk event, one of the most far-flung on the calendar, have risen by almost 100% over 10 years – as evidence of its appeal, but stresses the importance of encouraging teams to progress to open classes if they can.

"Although there are fewer teams at top level than when the sport began, and the intermediate classes have become increasingly popular in their own right, there is nothing like the thrill of the open tracks. It's an infectious atmosphere to which spectators have unparalleled access, being able to get up close to the action and celebrate with the winners. We have had incredible competition at our events this year and are very much looking forward to the future." **H&H**

● ***For more information visit teamchasing.co.uk***

Storm

This dressage-trained hunter and schoolmistress excelled in every single way – even if you had to be wary of a water trough

MANY eventers take their horses hunting to improve their cross-country, but for Storm it helped her dressage.

“It gave her more lift,” reveals Jean Clemmit, master of the Staintondale from 2009, after whipping-in for 30 years, and still hunting twice a week at the age of 80. She rode the 16.1hh black mare for her 70th birthday meet.

Indeed, Storm excelled at dressage. Properly named Stormy Night, out of a part-Irish Draught, part-thoroughbred mare by Another Hoarwithy, the mare was bred by Jean’s friends Gill and Peter Mellor of Woodnook Arena, who had her for training from the age of four.

“She came back to me aged eight having done a lot of dressage – she was good at that,” says Jean. “Then she started hunting and she was fantastic.”

Storm proved adept at everything: “She whipped-in, carried the huntsman and was a brilliant outrider at the point-to-point – she’d stand and watch everyone gallop past and then pick them up.”

At Jean’s competition and livery yard, Storm was used for dressage demonstrations and as a schoolmistress.

“Anyone could get on her.”

She was kept going all year: “She was better for working,” and excelled in the ring.

“She was quality looking, which is why she did so well showing in the summer. She was always in the money.” She did a little bit of eventing, too.

Despite her success elsewhere, Storm “found her place when she started hunting. She was keen, but she would jump wherever I wanted to go. I trusted her. We jumped a gate once – I thought, ‘Dare I do this?’ and then we were over”.

She understood her job completely: “They do, don’t they? They just know. She was fantastic with hounds, loved them, and if hounds were going, Storm was going.”

But she could also be feisty: “She knew her place was in front. I was mostly on my own, so it was OK, but she was strong in the field.”

At home, she was “easy to do in every way, a very nice person”, although she could be tricky: “She was very spooky to hack out. It was funny – the girls would say, ‘I’d be safer on that just-backed four-year-old!’”

Her main quirk was that she was always looking for something to drink.

“Even if we were galloping across a field, if she saw a water trough in the distance, then she’d be off to it. The girls would always have water on the lorry for her and she would plunge straight in.”

Aged 22, Storm did Boxing Day and she “felt a bit off”, then “fell away to nothing in February”, so went to kennels. Without enjoying the longevity of Jean, she certainly filled her years to the max. **H&H**

> *“She did a lot of dressage – she was very good at that”*

Words by Octavia Pollock. Picture by Derek Baker

The features we'd really like to read

While warming up in the bath after hunting, *H&H* hunting editor *Catherine Austen*'s mind wanders to the less serious side of our sporting lives

ONE of life's greatest pleasures has to be a properly hot bath after a cold, wet day's hunting. Those of you who step from stirrup into well-heated car – and are thence nicely dried out – into your warm house won't really understand. You need to have washed off your own horse and therefore be newly soaked at least to each elbow. The horse is now tucked up warm, while you're shivering in an unheated tack room cleaning your filthy tack.

Eventually you get home, and one last burst of stamina is needed to wash off your boots, put the trees back in, hang up your coat to dry, then feed the dogs. Only then can you peel off each soggy layer down to your goose-pimpled skin and drop like a porpoise into the bath, where the water must be deep and almost scalding.

As you gradually thaw in this steaming tub of delight, there is time for reflection. If you add a gin and tonic into the mix, bearing in mind you may not have eaten since last night (breakfast on a hunting morning fills me with horror) and are dehydrated, your ponderings can become a bit like Dumbo's pink-elephant hallucinations in the Disney classic.

In this very situation last Saturday evening, I began thinking of the hunting features I would have liked to have run in my tenure editing these pages, but haven't been able to, for reasons of cost, difficulty, potential outrage or legal issues. "How to pull a huntsman – and why you shouldn't bother", by Scarlett Fever. "Hound showing – the dirtiest tricks revealed", by Phil Pockets-Withliver. That sort of thing.

It took me years to persuade my former distinguished editor to run "Hunting's most eligible bachelors". Ten years on, I think most of the women our selection of hotties later married would agree that they have run to seed a trifle. "Hunting's most eligible divorcé(e)s" is more my bag these days.

I've always wanted to run a piece called "How to look good out hunting", but I've only wanted one person – a former glossy magazine editor – to write it, and she has declined, claiming to be too busy. So it languishes on my "one day" list, waiting for the right writer and the right moment. I'd feel a fraud if I wrote it myself – I lack the necessary slimness of thigh and while I'm reasonably smart when booted and spurred, I'll never be elegant.

But there are a few tenets to help you "look good out hunting". Severity is the watchword – nothing loose, flapping, unmended or unpolished. Coats and breeches in good, thick material that fit properly and are cut to flatter your own shape, not the one you'd like to have.

Old-fashioned, baggy breeches are great on men, but only work on women if they have the aforementioned long, slim thighs. I know – I've tried and will never forget our former senior master's peals of laughter as he said he'd never seen anything as unflattering on anybody as my brand-new, handmade, corduroy breeches. Such a shame, but he was quite right.

Short, bum-freezer coats are more suited to showjumpers – but very long-skirted ones only really work, I think, on women with long upper bodies to balance the effect.

Stocks must be neatly tied and pinned to your hunting shirt at both ends – and under the knot. Personally, I think stock pins should be utterly plain, but people get quite wound up if I say that and tell me about family heirlooms with crossed foxes with ruby eyes and so on.

Hair must be secured so that no wisps or tendrils can be seen. On the make-up front, less is more. Lipstick is only OK on those glamorous older ladies who still go better across the country than everyone half their age.

Of course, the point is practicality and warmth, and it is never about the amount of money you spend on your clothes; it's about how you present yourself. And we all have days when you haven't got time to scrub off that stable stain, or the baby has been sick down your front, or the dog makes a bed on your hunting coat in the car on the way to the meet.

And please don't write in, telling me how irrelevant and unimportant the whole thing is and how you've got more important things to worry about – I know that. Standards are no bad thing, however; they tend to affect the way we conduct ourselves, the way we treat others and the respect we have for one another. **H&H**

Pictures by Emma Earnshaw

Gentle giant learns to trust

Fiona Bigwood claims an especially fulfilling grand prix victory, while exciting younger riders open their 2023 campaigns with success

By POLLY BRYAN

Daytona Platinum brings his confidence from home to the indoor arena for the first time, and he and Fiona Bigwood are rewarded with a grand prix win

Vale View High Profile Show, Leics

"AFTER all our work over the winter, I just wanted our first show of 2023 to be a good one," said Fiona Bigwood. And it was mission accomplished for Fiona, who came away with a grand prix victory riding the giant Dante Weltino son Daytona Platinum.

The pair scored 72.5% to lead what proved a highly competitive class, as they pipped long-time leaders Becky Moody and Famke PF to victory from a late draw.

"He has always been nervous indoors, so it was nice to come out and do a test like that," said Fiona, explaining that while the grand prix work itself has never been difficult for 12-year-old "Dino", he has struggled with confidence.

"This time he was confident from the moment we arrived at the show, throughout the warm-up as well," said Fiona. "That was so nice, as it's taken what feels like forever. I love it when they start trusting you."

Dino stands at around 18.3hh – possibly more, as he exceeds Fiona's measuring stick.

"In things like the zig-zag all I can think is, 'Will there be enough room'," laughed the Olympic silver medallist. "His two-time changes were really good, but we only just about fitted them in."

Fiona's daughter Mette also kickstarted the year with a win, topping a strong junior individual class on the final day of the show with 71.13% riding the 16-year-old Sandro Hit son Cashmir.

"We didn't expect her to win – the first day here he was very fresh and more tense than usual, but today he was much more confident," said Fiona. "I told Mette to go in and ride positively."

The junior team test class went to Gracie Morgan and First Pitch.

Despite a "slightly lairy" warm-up, Becky Moody and the exciting

Charlotte Lutener and Full Fusion BS claim an inter I with plus-70%

Desperado stallion James Bond II triumphed at both prix st georges (PSG) and inter I, with over 72% at each level.

"He has always been a super talented horse but it has taken a little while to get him where I want him. He needs the competition mileage now," said Becky of Jo Cooper's nine-year-old, who will target small tour this year and grand prix in 2024.

"He's always very rideable in a test but we both need to get more confident in the warm-up – most of the time he is very level-headed, but the warm-up is where his stallion-ness tends to come out."

One of Becky's students, Charlotte Lutener, led the second day's inter I. This win, with just under 72%, was an important step along the road to under-25 grand prix, which is 22-year-old Charlotte's aim for Full Fusion BS.

"Under-25s is a massive step up and we're spending a lot of time training at home with Becky to develop that work. I want to wait until we're really ready, so for now we'll just do a bit more small tour," said Charlotte, who bought the Blue Hors Zack mare from Becky in 2020 and competed her successfully in young riders.

"Our test actually had a couple of mistakes, including in the threes where I relaxed at the end of the line and she gave me another. But I was so pleased with my score. After our winter training, it feels as though everything is coming together. She is a fabulous mare and I love competing her."

The under-25 grand prix went to 23-year-old Sussex-based French rider Camille Audo. She rode Behroez to a double victory, heading a sizeable inter II line-up as well. It was also a successful weekend for Camille's trainer, Sarah Millis, who piloted Nicola Naylor's Ferrari V to PSG victory on the final day of the show, with just under 70%.

Cruz III and 12-year-old Violet Hawkins take both children's classes

"HE COMES TO LIFE"

GEMMA OWEN stepped up to ride her first inter I in two-and-a-half years with Sirius Black, finishing sixth, and then collecting a PSG win the following day with the Stedinger 18-year-old.

> *"We sometimes call him the worm!"*
>
> VIOLET HAWKINS, 12, ON CRUZ III

"The inter I was a slight gamble as it was my first really competitive test at that level but 'Siz' felt amazing and loves the test," said Gemma. "He really comes to life and knows what's coming, which can be a challenge in itself as he's a big horse to half-halt, but I love riding him when he's like that.

"I was thrilled with our PSG. Sarah Higgins and I have been working a lot on the canter pirouettes in training and I'm really pleased with how they went in the test. It's still work in progress but I can definitely feel an improvement."

Gemma has been on something of a winning streak since her stint on ITV's *Love Island* last summer, having also triumphed at PSG at the Arena UK High Profile show before Christmas.

"I'm hoping to do some Premier Leagues this year and if I could manage to get to an international at small tour, that would be the icing on the cake," said the 19-year-old.

Ruby Hughes is another teenager enjoying a run of success. Since teaming up with Kate Lister's World Exclusive in mid-2022, Ruby has scored consistently over 70% and she continued the trend here, taking a young rider win with 71.42%.

Jess Dunn scored an advanced medium one-two with Dan It's Carston filling the top spot on 70.61%. Hokita finished just behind in second, having already taken the runner-up slot in the show's opening advanced medium, behind Karla Deir and Silver Dream (see box, below).

After a successful 2022, 12-year-old Violet Hawkins entered 2023 riding the same winning wave. Violet claimed a decisive victory in both children's classes, riding Cruz III (Tom), scoring 73.13% in the team test. She was also second in both riding DZL Royal Sunrise (Paddy).

"Tom did a really nice test and I was very pleased, especially with the simple changes," said Violet. "They are not our best movement together but he did them well."

Violet has been competing her trainer Jayne Turney's 14.1hh Caesar 171 son Tom since last summer, while part-bred Welsh pony Paddy was bought in May 2021. She says both ponies are very different, and have helped her to become a more versatile rider.

"Tom is really forward and soft and we sometimes call him the worm, while Paddy is more wooden and can be lazy," she explained.

Violet also rode her first ever pony FEI team test with Cruz, finishing eighth. The class was won by Demi Howard-Cartwright on Fin C We, with the individual going to Isla Sully on Reitland's Don Totilas. **H&H**

"IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAVEN'T SOUNDED LIKE I NEED A VENTILATOR"

WORKING on her own fitness has paid off for Karla Deir, who came away from her first High Profile show with an unexpected advanced medium victory on Silver Dream.

The Contendor 15-year-old was bought as a three-year-old from Poland by Karla's husband George Martin, and George trained "Elf" up to PSG before Karla took over the ride in 2022.

"This is totally new to me as I had only ever competed to medium," explained Karla.

"Elf is a wonderful person and very forgiving but he is also very bouncy and not the easiest to ride. This was the first time I've ridden through the test and not sounded as though I needed a ventilator by the end of it!

I OWE IT TO

"I've been going to the gym, and working with a personal trainer twice a week, and it's made a massive difference. Riding more helps generally, but doing the extra cardio and strengthening work has been huge."

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Clarke boasts super trio

Upcoming horses are ones to watch, while a schoolmaster gives positive experience to a young rider

By STEPHANIE BATEMAN

Aintree EC, Merseyside

KIRSTIE CLARKE proved that she is one to watch for 2023, when recording a whopping eight victories with three horses over two days.

Jenny Ainscough's five-year-old gelding Santa Monica Bay began proceedings with four prelim wins, one with plus-70%.

"He came to me to be sold, so we thought we'd do a few shows and he's done really well," said Kirstie. "He is an absolute pleasure. Every time out, he improves. It's really nice to watch him grow in confidence and there is still so much more to come."

> *"It's really nice to watch him grow in confidence"*
> KIRSTIE CLARKE

Kirstie Clarke lands a brace of novices – both with plus-70% scores – aboard her own Nureno, finishing with eight victories in total on three horses over two days

Her next ride, another five-year-old called Sunshine Valley, won two novices with plus-70% for owner Nicola Fishwick.

"She bought him four weeks ago unseen from a video, so it was a bit of a gamble, but he is amazing," added Kirstie. "He's a cheeky character and very fun. The plan is to campaign him up the levels and then hopefully Nicky will take over the ride."

With her own five-year-old Nureno, Kirstie landed both novices on the second day, again with plus-70%.

"He is my favourite horse," she said. "He goes in the arena and knows what he has to do. I'll campaign him up through the levels and do some young horse classes this year. He's so talented, but has the nicest brain. He's entire but you wouldn't know."

'Murphy means the world to everyone'

Allens Hill, Worcestershire

CONNEMARA Slieve Rushen Frank proved he has what it takes to beat the big guns when bagging two elementary wins for owner Gabriella Kozersky. Known as Murphy at home, the 10-year-old has been in the family for four years.

"He means the world to everyone and is going to stay forever," said 17-year-old Gabriella, who also events the 14.2hh gelding up to BE100.

"We started affiliated dressage a year ago and I've learnt so much along the way, thanks to my trainer Diane Thurman-Baker. Murphy hasn't got naturally big movement, so it's rewarding to see that he's been able to develop into a nice dressage pony."

The pair are training at home and will aim for novice level eventing this year.

"He's quite an exuberant mover for a Connie," she added. "We do a lot of half-pass and travers to make him more supple and help him lift his forehand, which gives his collected work and medium trot more expression."

WORKING RIDER

TEAMWORK MAKES KAY'S DREAM WORK

BEING a secondary school PE teacher, farmer's wife and mother to two children doesn't leave Katie Kay much time to ride, but with help from her mother Susie Dunn, she is able to ride and compete at weekends. The teamwork pays off and, at the Ian Stark EC in the Scottish Borders, Katie and Irish Sport Horse gelding Four Leaf Clover won both prelims with over 73%.

"He's rising six and we've had him a year now," said Katie, who's been producing the horse primarily to event, but says she'll do "a bit of everything" with him.

The gelding has been placed every time out, although these were his best scores to date.

"I have my mum to thank, because she rides him and does everything with him during the week," added Katie. "He's a really genuine, sweet, young horse and I've really enjoyed bringing him on. He may not be the flashiest, but he has good rhythm and is very trainable and nice to work with."

'I can't believe my luck'

Kelsall Hill, Cheshire

"She knows what she's doing," says Emily Entwistle of former event horse Elarieta, as the pair score two elementary wins

BRIDGET TATE enjoyed a successful week, landing a medium with 70.74% at Kelsall Hill, followed by both mediums with 81.72% and 76.06% at Rodbaston EC a few days later. She was riding the rising nine-year-old Francesco S, aka Felix.

"I saw him two years ago at the regionals with Mark Forrest riding him and I couldn't take my eyes off him," said Bridget. "Then some friends of mine bought him and eventually decided to sell him, so they've sent him to me on sales livery. They're keen for me to compete him in the meantime. I can't believe my luck."

Bridget is working on the changes before taking the Fürstenball gelding out at advanced medium.

"He has fantastic paces and a great temperament," she added. "When I took him to Kelsall, he was a bit nervous as I'd only had him a week and he went within himself. Three days later, we went to Rodbaston and I pushed him a bit more and he did it for me. He's got pirouettes, piaffe and passage, so he'll be an amazing junior or young rider horse."

Former event horse Elarieta, earned two elementary wins at Kelsall with just shy of 70% with Emily Entwistle.

"She's 13 now and is a bit of a schoolmaster for me to take up the levels," said Emily who is studying sport science at Hartpury University. "As soon as she gets in the ring, she knows what she's doing and does it really well. My plan is to keep training and take her up the levels."

A ride-and-drive riding school cob held his own at novice. Under his owner Nathalie Ecclestone, seven-year-old traditional cob/Welsh gelding Prince I, landed the win with 74.79%.

"He's my mum Liz's driving cob, and we also use him in lessons at our riding school, Oakhanger Riding Centre," said Nathalie. "To keep him fit, he also does a bit of dressage and jumping. He's a real all-rounder and very sensible and intelligent."

Pictures by 1stclassimages.com, Celia Cadwallader and kevinsparrow.co.uk

Grande score for Hooley

Felbridge Showground, W Sussex

IZZY HOOLEY's rising five-year-old Don Grande pulled off an impressive performance to top two novices, one with a dazzling 82.7%. Izzy, who rides for Andrew Gould, has owned the rising five-year-old gelding for a year.

"We backed him at work and he's been amazing and very straightforward," she said, adding that his medium trot and canter are particular strengths. "We're working on elementary at home, so I'll take him out once he's established. I keep him at work, so we get daily coaching from Andrew, which is amazing."

Izzy Hooley and the Don Nobless rising five-year-old Don Grande win two novices, one with 82.7%

Private banker Rebecca Swain rode her nine-year-old gelding Despacito W to double advanced medium victory.

"He's quite clever and picks things up easily and has been very forgiving, as he is the first horse that I've trained myself," explained Rebecca. "My older horse gave me some experience at the higher levels up to inter II, but it's a different ball game when you have a younger one. His changes are a highlight – he finds collection easy – and grand prix is our main goal." **H&H**

> *"It's a different ball game now"*
> REBECCA SWAIN

‘I just thought I’d have a go’

Pony teams are the target for one combination and a teenager transforms a “stiff” hunter into a winner

By SARAH RADFORD

Madison Seedhouse notches up a brace of JA classic victories aboard 14-year-old Vaughann De Vuzit, the rider also landing the spoils in the JC/JA handicap

Large pony premier, Morris EC, East Ayrshire

MADISON SEEDHOUSE hit the ground running at the opening pony premier of the season, winning both JA classics as well as the Blue Chip Pro sparkle JC/JA handicap between her rides Vaughann De Vuzit and Quaprice D’Astree.

There were no clears in the first day’s JA classic, where Madison (Quaprice D’Astree) and Emily Gulliver (Fleur De Nuit 8) agreed to share the spoils after both notching up four faults in the first round.

The same riders went head-to-head on Sunday, as the only two through to the third and final round. Madison, this time riding Vaughann De Vuzit, finished out in front by a mighty 10.92sec.

“I was second to go and I just thought I’d have a go – he felt really confident. We planned the turns before we went in, stuck to the plan and it went really well,” said Madison, who also won the JC/JA handicap on the 14-year-old grey, whom she started competing this time last year.

Madison stepped up to JA tracks last year and is now in her final year of ponies, having just turned 16.

“We went to a few youth shows at the end of last year, where we could jump both the horses and the ponies, but this year I’ll mostly be focusing on the ponies, as the aim is to hopefully get one of them onto the team for the pony Europeans,” said Madison. “They’ve had a few chilled weeks, so we wanted to get them out.

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Marni McMyn and Eyre Diva Dior are one of three combinations to tie for the first prize in the winter JD/JC handicap

“We’ll be heading to the Sunshine Tour and then to Le Mans with the ponies, as the Europeans are being held there, so they’ll have been to the venue if hopefully we get picked.”

“I’M REALLY PROUD OF HER”

THE first day of the winter JD/JC handicap was also decided in a tie, when three riders jumped clear in the second round and elected not to jump again, having each secured one of the three tickets for the final at the Royal International.

First prize was divided between Marni McMyn (Eyre Diva Dior); Emily Irvine (Runard Lass) and Charlotte Gaw (Clonberne Leam Pondi).

It was one of two wins at the show for Marni, who also headed the 148cm restricted open with MHS Kansas.

Both 15-year-old Kansas and 10-year-old “Darcy” (Eyre Diva Dior), who was discovered on a buying trip to Ireland four years ago, have been passed down to Marni from her sister Tess.

“Darcy had been jumping Foxhunters but got injured and we started bringing her back into work at the beginning of last year – it took a year to really get her back,” Marni said. “I’m really proud of her qualifying, it was a long time coming but the past couple of months she’s really matured.

“It meant a lot to qualify

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Pictures by Jamie Agnew Photography, Top Shots Photography and Stefan Lafrentz

alongside my best friend Charlotte. We knew in the second round that if we jumped clear, we'd get a ticket. I wasn't that emotional when I qualified, but I ran to the ring to watch Charlotte as she was last. Once I knew she'd gone clear, I burst into tears. We'll go to Hickstead in convoy now," added Marni, who jumped the winter JC final last year on Hoofprint Caleb.

"HE TOOK IT ALL IN HIS STRIDE"

SEVEN combinations made it through to the third round of the second day's winter JD/JC qualifier. Amy Baxter and 14-year-old Irish gelding Ballyboran came out on top when they jumped the fastest of two double clears by two seconds.

"I was second-last and neither me nor my dad realised there'd only been one clear," Amy said. "I just went in and did my job – because it was an early qualifier, there wasn't too much pressure."

This time last year, the pair were contesting Blue Chip qualifiers, but stepped up to Hickstead qualifiers towards the end of the season.

"We had a very good run at the Blue Chip Championships. Then through the summer, we did newcomers and Foxhunter second rounds, so I thought I could have a good winter season in my last year – and we've qualified on one of the first opportunities," said Amy.

"Both days the courses were quite big, as you'd expect for a qualifier, and the second day was quite technical. Ballyboran is a short-striding pony and they are forward distances at Morris as it's such a big arena – everyone was going on a different stride, but you just had to see what you could see. He took it all in his stride though."

The second ticket went to Jessica Rood and Cherie Amour II.

Below: Amy Baxter and Ballyboran clinch a qualifying win in the winter JD/JC

SOLWAY
EQUESTRIAN

A 17hh hunter who can turn like a pony

Conrhenny, Isle of Man

FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD George Hotchkiss hit all three targets in one strike when he headed the Joshua Jones winter discovery, the Bliss of London winter novice and the Heritage Insurance diamond qualifier with his King Of Quality.

"We had a very good weekend," said George. "I only had the one chance to qualify and I managed to get all the ones I was aiming for in one day. It was quite a long day, but he felt like he could have done five more rounds, he's very fit."

George has been riding the eight-year-old OBOS Quality x Diamond Lad gelding since October 2020. He was bought from a yard in Exeter after being imported from Ireland.

"He'd only done hunting, had a stiff neck and didn't know how to canter," George said. "We just did road work with him through the first summer and he started jumping at the end of that year. He's been a star ever since. You wouldn't think he's as agile as he is, but he turns like a 15hh pony."

King Of Quality also hunts and events, competing at the Pony Club area trials in 2021, and is also competed by George's mother Lindsey. She is also Blue Chip-bound, having finished third in the winter novice, fifth in the diamond and third in the winter discovery with Final Call.

Emma Maguire and Orlando Moon top the winter novice qualifier

Maguire lands a winning double

Solihull RC, West Midlands

EMMA MAGUIRE started her year with two wins on two different horses, including taking the top spot in the Bliss of London winter novice qualifier with the promising rising five-year-old, Orlando Moon.

Emma bought the 16hh gelding, who was bred by the Abramovich family, from Jake Saywell in October.

"I had another youngster I'd bought from Jake, who I'd sold. I bumped into him in September and he said he had another one who would suit me," said Emma, who works for Equesure insurance brokers. "He was just backed and I've been spending time getting to know him."

Emma was second to go in the jump-off, in which she delivered one of only two double clears.

"He isn't five until August. I just popped him round, but didn't expect him to go clear as it caught a lot out," she said.

Emma, who is based with Matthew Lanni, also won the 1.10m open with the 12-year-old 15.2hh Master Geronimo, whom she has produced from just-backed to 1.40m.

"I dropped him down as I can't keep a young horse at a show all day waiting for the bigger class, so I just took him for a spin round," she said. "He's been jumping children-on-horses classes with Sienna Lanni and she's planning to do those with him again. He's a real little winner." **H&H**

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

WORLD CUP WIN FOR WHITAKER

JOE WHITAKER and Jessica Crane's Hulahupe JR landed the Al Shira'aa Longines Diamond Tour FEI Jumping World Cup grand prix at the CSI4*-W Al Shira'aa International in Abu Dhabi.

From an 11-strong jump-off, the pair rocketed home over 1.5sec quicker than runner-up Billy Twomey (Chat Botte ED) to scoop their biggest win together.

Ireland's Jessica Burke was also a victor at the show riding Inpulss, while there was a Breen Equestrian one-two in the seven-year-olds with Michael Duffy winning on Geniale Star Kervec, ahead of Shane Breen on Be Stakkato.

KENNY IN FORM

IRISHMAN Darragh Kenny landed the CSI3* grand prix during week one of the Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington, Florida, riding Volnay Du Boisdeville.

"He's an incredible horse and he's better when he's fresh," he said of the 14-year-old Winningmood stallion. "You can trust him at the jumps and he's very fast in jump-offs."

THE KING REIGNS

WORLD champions Henrik von Eckermann and King Edward landed their second World Cup of the season in Basel, Switzerland, flying home 0.06sec quicker than nearest challenger Marcus Ehning on Stargold.

"I was very worried about Marcus, but my luck was that he went six strides to the double and I got there in five," said Henrik (pictured, below).

Scott Brash won Friday's 1.45m two-phase on Hello Mr President.

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A terrific advert for Thomas's training skills

A former Gold Cup-winning jockey trains a "notoriously fragile" chaser to an emotional win after a 13-month lay-off, and Dan Skelton enjoys a Saturday four-timer

By MARCUS ARMYTAGE

Warwick Racecourse

THIS has been a difficult season for Cardiff-based trainer Sam Thomas, a great start and then one of those things you just do not see coming when you wake up in the morning: being one of five people involved in a serious helicopter crash after a day's shooting in North Wales.

His boss, Dai Walters, suffered serious injuries on that dark night in November and his recovery remains ongoing. Thomas, who memorably rode Denman to success in the Gold Cup, pretty much walked away and will have suffered longer-lasting physical trauma when he was a jockey.

However the mental damage from that is never going to be a quick fix – however strong you are.

Al Dancer returned to form to win the Grand Sefton over the National fences at Aintree at the end of that week but the yard, he admitted on Saturday, had struggled since. Not surprisingly.

However, an across-the-card double with Iwilldoit – having his first start since winning the Welsh National more than a year earlier – in the Wigley Group Classic Chase and Deere Mark in the handicap hurdle at Kempton, was a good way to put 2022 behind him and start 2023 on a better footing.

It is one thing bringing a horse back after a long lay-off to win a sprint on the Flat or even a normal chase, but in something as stamina sapping as Saturday's three miles five furlongs in the heavy, victory was a terrific advert for Thomas's skills in what is still the early part of his second career.

> *"It's lovely to nip down the road and get a Grade Two double!"*
>
> DAN SKELTON

The very lightly raced 10-year-old was having only his fifth start over fences but will need another run before the middle of February if he is to qualify for the Grand National, a traditional destination for winners of this race.

But, as his record suggests, Iwilldoit is notoriously fragile and turning him out again within a month of Saturday's gruelling reappearance is not something Thomas will be keen to push.

On Saturday he and Matt Sheppard jumped to the front at the second last (normally third last) and, though the horse tired a bit on the long run-in (as they bypassed the last fence), as he was perfectly entitled to do, he still beat the Irish challenger Mr Invincible by nearly three lengths.

Stan Sheppard and Iwilldoit clear the last to win The Wigley Group Classic Handicap Chase

Unlike after the Welsh National, the winners enclosure was packed with members of the Diamond Racing Syndicate. Kevin Burgess, their racing manager, said: "That was unbelievable, he's been off 13 months. It's just a wonderful training performance. We knew he'd stay and that the conditions were in his favour, but that probably fit the bill for several others in the race as well.

"We were hopeful rather than expectant, but coming round that final circuit it was like the Welsh National again – others were falling away and we were picking them off. Once he got into the lead I just couldn't see anything beating him, it was incredible.

"Sadly the owners couldn't be with us for the Welsh National win because of Covid restrictions. It was frustrating because if the race was in England they'd have been able to come, so to have this day today is better and that's because they're here."

Thomas added: "We didn't get him in till a bit later and he missed the Welsh National [last month]. It's emotional.

"He's been a bit of a worrier and a fussy eater, but as the years have gone on he's got more mature. He's certainly a lot easier to train than he was over the years. We couldn't have galloped him before the Welsh National but he worked well on Tuesday. Those were his conditions and that was amazing.

"He doesn't need these conditions, but the speed he was going at the start was the same speed that he was going at the finish. He's very one-paced and it's nice that he's given us a few options going forward – but the softer the better. I don't know about Aintree. He needs six runs over fences and he's only had five, so we'd need to run him again before the weights come out. We could look at something like the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris."

Pictures by Getty Images and Alamy

Galia Des Liteaux (yellow silks) finds the conditions just right in the Eventmasters.co.uk novices chase and wins under Harry Skelton

A GRADE TWO DOUBLE

DAN SKELTON also had a flying start to the season before a slightly quieter post-Christmas period, but his horses were back in sparkling form with a Grade Two double at Warwick.

Galia Des Liteaux loved the conditions in the Eventmasters.co.uk Hampton Novices' Chase, and Grey Dawning triumphed in a hot looking Ballymore Leamington Novices' Hurdle.

All seven runners in the Leamington had won their previous starts but a combination of ground and pace sorted them out and, despite being sandwiched between the runner-up Ginny's Destiny and third Knowsley Road going to the second last, it was Grey Dawning who stayed on best in a slow-motion finish to win by five lengths.

"All that banging around did him no harm," said the trainer, reflecting on the race. "It helped him concentrate. When he won at Kempton he was all over the shop so getting a bump wasn't the worst thing in the world. We've always liked him. I know you'd say that about a two-time bumper winner but they have to convert that. There's not much negative to say about him.

"When he was beaten first time out [this season] it was by a very good horse [Man At Work] of David Pipe's. He's just smart. I had to take him to Kempton last time because he was so well handicapped. Harry said he wasn't loving the ground but he's getting away with it.

"He's going the right way and there are lots of options. My immediate reaction is he should be going three miles rather than two-and-a-half and we'll have him in the Albert Bartlett. If we're not happy with that we'll go to Aintree. It's lovely to nip down the round and get a Grade Two double at Warwick – I love that!"

Jockey makes winning return from broken neck

Kempton Park Racecourse

BOTH of Dan Skelton's Warwick winners were ridden by his brother Harry, but the biggest winner of the day was West Balboa. Ridden by Dan's sister-in-law Bridget Andrews, the mare got back up on the line in a terrific finish with Red Risk in the Coral Lanzarote Hurdle at Kempton.

It was the biggest win for Andrews since she returned from six months off after breaking her neck in April.

"The broken neck was obviously a blip in the road and I'm not going to lie it was hard to get back, but luckily it was in the summer and I gave myself all the time I needed," she reflected. "This is what we get back for – the big days and the really nice horses we have in the yard.

"You all hope not to have those bad injuries and when I had the fall at Warwick I got up and thought I was okay. I walked around for two weeks and something wasn't quite right, but I never thought I broke my neck!

"Everyone at Dan's is so supportive and I can't thank them enough for that as I do need that bit of confidence sometimes. I love being part of the team there. I had a big winner for Mr and Mrs Faulks [part-owners of West Balboa] on Roksana, and I've had my Festival win on Mohaayed and won on Protektorat in the Many Clouds Chase. This is right up there though as I've been second many times in this race so it is nice to get a big one." **H&H**

RIDE OF THE WEEK

AFTER what may be one of the shortest retirements in sporting history, jockey Davy Russell made a winning return on Sunday. After retiring in December, the Irishman announced his return "for a short period" to fill in for the injured Jack Kennedy, and rode the Gordon Elliott-trained Sa Fureur (right of image) to victory in Punchestown's maiden hurdle.

Dawson dominates

A jockey kick-starts his season with a triple win, while a husband-and-wife duo pull off multiple victories across two meetings

By STEPHANIE BATEMAN

Yorkshire Area Point-to-Point Club, Sheriff Hutton, Yorkshire

JOCKEY John Dawson opened this year's pointing campaign at the Yorkshire area's first meeting of the season by scoring a treble.

His first victory came in the first division of the conditions (level two) 5yo&up aboard former chaser Mount Mews for Lucinda Hughes, who was making a return to the racecourse after 18 months sidelined with an injury.

“He hadn't run for a long time, so it was just about getting a start into him and seeing what remains,” said John. “We didn't go very fast to give him half a chance, but he dragged me around pretty much the whole way and seemed to be enjoying it. Hopefully he'll come on for that and be a good, fun pointer. He ran under Rules with the Jeffersons over hurdles and then went over fences, but he didn't look as good over fences, so a step down to pointing is suiting him.”

The Cherry Coward-trained seven-year-old Tom Cody, was next in the winners enclosure, having won the second division of the conditions (level two) 5yo&up for owner Ian Wilson.

“It was a slightly more competitive division and he had to step up on what he'd done last year,” said John. “He had to have a lot of heart and he did – he actually surprised me with how good he was.”

Next up was former Grade One hurdler Black Op, who landed the men's open for trainer Emma Clark and owner Charles Clark.

“This was his strongest race in points, even though I don't think the ground was to his liking, but he got away with it,” said John. “He was a good horse for Tom George and ran in some good Grade One races as a hurdler, and also finished seventh in the 2021 Cheltenham Gold Cup, so he's got plenty of black type. The plan is to go to the Foxhunters at Cheltenham with him.”

> *“He seemed to be enjoying it”*
> JOHN DAWSON ON MOUNT MEWS

Another horse to head to the Foxhunters is Dubai Quest, who won the ladies' open, kicking off a double for Gina Andrews.

John Dawson (right) goes on to claim the win in the first division of the conditions (level two) 5yo&up aboard former chaser Mount Mews for owner/trainer Lucinda Hughes

"He won pretty easily to be honest, but he's a very classy horse and loves soft ground," said Gina. "He'll head straight to the Festival now for the Foxhunters."

Five-year-old Big City Roller's win in the maiden 4,5&6yo completed Gina's brace.

"He's run once before when he was fourth at Larkhill in November and he just felt like he benefited a lot from having that run," Gina added. "He was a lot more assured today. He didn't jump as well as he could, but the ground was quite deep and he had to be tough. He didn't let me down late on and won well in the end."

Pictures by Tom Milburn Photography and Neale Blackburn

The Owens own the day

Dunston Harriers, Ampton, Suffolk

Midnight Cowboy storms to victory under Rupert Stearn to claim the spoils in the men's open

ANOTHER successful husband and wife duo, trainers James and Jennifer Owen, scored a race apiece when landing the men's open with Midnight Cowboy and the conditions (level two) 9yo&up with Twilight Girl.

James bought Twilight Girl from Ireland to give the lads working on his yard some race-riding experience.

"She ran two weeks ago at Horseheath and just got beat a short head with Tommy Frogley, who was having his first ride, and Jamie Gambin has won his first race on her today, so she's doing her job," said James.

"She'll run once or twice a month and the lads will share the ride. She's 10 and had a win under Rules, so carried a penalty, which made her a bit cheaper to buy, but she's proving to be better than we thought she would be. She's quite a buzzy filly, but very straightforward and honest."

Wife Jennifer, who is training most of the pointers this year due to James having his licence under Rules, enjoyed her first win when clerk of the course Simon Stearn's Midnight Cowboy stormed home in the men's open under Rupert Stearn.

"He's a lovely horse and has been a great servant to us," added James. "He's doing a great job for his owners, the Stearns, and won a couple for them last season. It was a surprise that he won today, because Jenny thought that he'd need a run, but Rupert said he felt better than ever and he won quite well. It's nice for Simon because he does such a good job as clerk of the course and he got a huge cheer."

"Rupert said he felt better than ever and he won quite well"

JAMES OWEN ON MIDNIGHT COWBOY'S "SURPRISE" WIN

The restricted was won by Supreme Johnson under Tom Broughton for Myles Osborne.

"I was brought down in the maiden division two, which was frustrating because Myles's horses are all going really well, so it was good to get a win for him in the restricted," said Tom.

"Supreme Johnson has had very inconsistent form with lots of pull-ups on his record, but he's just quite quirky and likes races to go his way. It was a stronger race today and the ground suited him better, so it was all in his favour."

Trainer Tom Ellis had a successful day when Precious Bounty won the ladies' open under owner Ellie Callwood.

"Ellie rode her first winner on him last season – that is his sixth win for her now," explained Gina Andrews, Tom's wife. "He's been a brilliant little horse for her and the Ice 'N' Slice Racing Club syndicate who own him. It was his first time in an open race and he really had to step up because it was competitive. Ellie works really hard with him at home, so it was nice to see her repaid." **H&H**

"IT'S BEEN BRILLIANT"

FIRST WIN

THE first ride aboard Buachaill Dana proved to be a lucky one for Seb Mead, who broke his duck when winning the conditions (level two) for novice riders 6yo&up for trainer David Phelan and owner Paul Burden.

Seb, who is head lad for David, is in his second season.

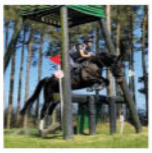
"I rode a schoolmaster last season who taught me the ropes and I've been lucky enough to be put up on a few horses for David, so it's been brilliant," said Seb, who has been at David's for two years. "Buachaill Dana is a lovely horse and won a few times for us last year. It was his first club run against older horses and we weren't sure how he'd go, but he took to it like a duck to water and jumped great. He's only six, so he's green enough, but he has really come on from last year."

16.3hh & over

Top WH Potential

Height: 17hh
Age: 6 years
Price: £16,500
Description: Exceptional Young Horse. Casper - 17hh rising 6yo superbly bred KWPN gelding by I'm Special De Muze x Singapore. Check out Lynch Equestrian.
+44 7780 451307
leah280389@aol.com

Talented allrounder

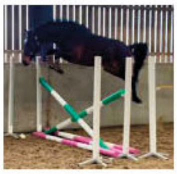


Height: 16hh
Age: 12 years
Price: £6,000
Description: 16h tb exracer gelding who has been retrained for 5yrs. Done BE90 and BD prelim. Has scope and talent to go far in any sphere. Based in Stirling.
07913 353371
ribh.wall.e@gmail.com

Stunning 6yrs

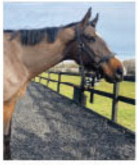
Height: 16.2hh
Age: 6 years
Price: £14,000
Description: Exceptional Young Horse. Wigwam. 6yo Coloured British Bred Sports Horse Gelding by Luxor At Lynch Equestrian.
+44 7780 451307
leah280389@aol.com

Beautiful 4 year old



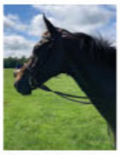
Height: 16.3hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £12,000
Description: Berlin x Tangelo Van de Zuuthoeve. A well put together, flashy type that oozes quality.
07377266171
info@argentoequestrian.co.uk

Bay gelding



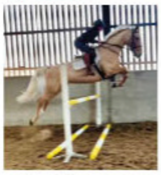
Height: 16.3hh
Age: 5 years
Price: £3,000
Description: Ralphy is a 16.3 tb gelding, 5 years old. Came over from Ireland 2 years ago. Showing a lot of potential. Good to show clip and load, really honest boy.
07473835602
Charlottestrud@icloud.com

Talented Allrounder



Height: 16.1hh
Age: 9 years
Price: £8,000
Description: 16.1 9y/o, homebred TB gelding. Hunted. SJ & HT to 100-plenty of Scope. Run in P2P and bumpers-eligible ROR. Good traffic/clip/shoe. No vices.
07766731164
Jennyviner@hotmail.com

Beautiful Palomino



Height: 16.1hh
Age: 8 years
Price: £5,950
Description: Top class palomino mare - 16'1 8 years old. An easy all rounder mare, that will turn her hoof to any discipline.
07377266171
info@argentoequestrian.co.uk

15.3hh -16.2hh

Dream Horse

Height: 16hh
Age: 3 years
Price: €14,000
Location: Spain
Description: Lusitano with passport, gelding, 3yo, 1.62cm, sweet character, boomproof, basic ridden. clean xrays. Whatsapp.
+34657314412
alexandalusianshorses@gmail.com

Exciting BE Prospect

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 6 years
Price: £8,750
Description: Dressage / Hunt / Event. Hilly - 16.1hh Rising 6yo ISH Gelding by Dillshan x Classic Vision / Ginger Dick At Lynch Equestrian.
07780451307
leah280389@aol.com

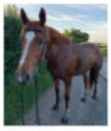
Looking for new home

Height: 15.3hh
Age: 8 years
Price: POA
Description: Gelding looking for new home. Has retired from racing and has been out hunting as well. Good to do, and a very handsome chap.
07799260872
anna.malmenlid@gmail.com

Related to Olympic stallion big star

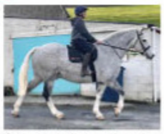
Height: 16.2hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £10,000
Location: Ash, Kent
Description: Vestie is a lovely blank canvas showing lots of jump and a good amount of blood. His grandmother is the full sister to the legendary Olympic stallion big star. He is striking in the flesh, with great conformation.
+447786513406
emacklinmay@hotmail.co.uk

7y/o talented mare



Height: 16.1hh
Age: 7 years
Price: £100,000
Description: Annie is a 16.1hh 7 year old Irish TB mare - She raced twice as a 4 year old so is eligible for ROR. She is not your typical thoroughbred - she would be suited to an allrounder or competition home. **+447876569939**
natali.disalvatore@gmail.com

Irish Draught X



Height: 16.2hh
Age: 5 years
Price: £12,000
Description: Irish Draught X Irish Cob Rising 6 yr old gelding stands at 16.2hh. He's by a class 1 Irish Draught "Fintan Himself" Broken to side saddle, no lumps.
07528874657
Jamiesharkey2015@outlook.com

Flashy 4 Year Old Gelding

Height: 16.1hh **Age:** 4 years
Price: £7,500
Location: Warwick, Radway
Description: Flashy 4 year old Chestnut Gelding. Excellent breeding to undoubtedly make him a prospect for the age classes.
07377266171
info@argentoequestrian.co.uk

16.2 ISH mare

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 13 years
Price: POA
Description: 13yrs old good doer done abit of everything low mileage being wasted as don't have the time to do her justice NOT novice ride.
07523623134
jillshaw1971@aol.com

16.2 mare ISH

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 13 years
Price: POA
Description: Has completed in Unaf one day events and done well NOT novice ride get excitable in groups and events.
07523623134
jillshaw1971@aol.com

Scopey 3 year old mare

Height: 15.3hh **Age:** 3 years 8 months
Price: £8,000 **Location:** Ash, Kent
Description: 15'3 homebred mare By Gold digger (ridden by guy Williams) x Chaman x hois la Loi ii. Her grandmother jumped 1.50cm and her mother is full sister to several 1.50cm jumpers. I'm happy to also back her under saddle for an additional £800.
+447786513406
emacklinmay@hotmail.co.uk

Issy

Height: 16hh
Age: 7 years
Price: £4,500
Location: Aberporth
Description: Issy is a beautiful 7yr, 16hh old mare by Arcano. She is jumping fillers and distances with ease and would make a lovely all round fun horse.
+447915908328
sophiespiteri1@gmail.com

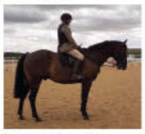
Albs

Height: 16hh
Age: 8 years
Price: £6,250
Description: Albs is a lovely 8 year old, 16hh gelding. He is super willing and will make a lovely teenagers horse.
+447915908328
sophiespiteri1@gmail.com

Sunny Boy

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £9,950
Location: Ireland
Description:
Stunning gelding with gorgeous temperament! Sunny Boy is a 4 year old purebred Irish Draught gelding, he is standing at 16.2 hh at the moment.
00353868077626
gertytynan@gmail.com

16hh 6yo gelding



Height: 16hh
Age: 6 years
Price: £8,000
Description: KWPN x pre. Done his basic education over the last 3 years, now ready to go out and compete with someone who wants to put their own stamp on him.
07752751356
clipstonrs@gmail.com

Lady

Height: 15hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £9,950
Location:
Ireland
Description: Pretty mare for the future! Lady is a 4 year old purebred Connemara mare, she is standing at 15 hh at the moment with more to grow.
00353868077626
gertytynan@gmail.com

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Warmblood mare 8yo

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 8 years
Price: £3,500
Location: Nottingham
Description: 8 year old warmblood mare looking for a competent home.
07790897069
julia.wilkinson7@hotmail.co.uk

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HORSES *for* SALE

14.2hh & under

Safe and sain 14.2hh

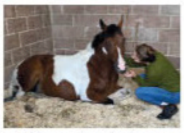
Height: 14.2hh
Age: 5 years
Price: £6,500
Description: Jessie 14.2hh, Rising 5yr old, Mare, Irish Cob Jessie is a superb stamp. Has been to several training shows and fun rides.
07979075247
hbarrett372@gmail.com

14.3hh -15.2hh

Beautiful PRE Mare

Height: 15.2hh
Age: 3 years
Price: £4,303
Location: Spain
Description: Beautiful PRE Mare, 3years old, 1.57cm, top mover and quality for dressage. She is available in Spain. More info PM or Whatsapp
+34657314412
alexandalusianshorses@gmail.com

Beautiful mare

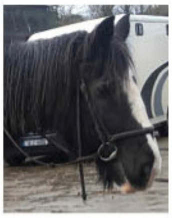


Height: 14.2hh
Age: 11 years
Price: POA
Description:
Very pretty coloured mare. Maisie is the perfect all rounder. Hacks alone/in company. Good to box shoe clip catch traffic. Has XC, SJ, PC.
07766314123
ceboxall@gmail.com

Grand prix 138cm

Height: 13.2hh
Age: 14 years
Price: POA
Location: Ireland
Description:
Top track 138cm. Registered Connemara. Incredible pony in every way. Very careful, super scope and great flat work. Very fast against the clock.
00353871911763
brennank033@gmail.com

15.1hh 23yo RDA cob



Height: 15.1hh
Age: 23 years
Price: £1,250
Description:
Quiet safe hack. Open to vet. Based Ireland w transport. Kind home please.
07772231872
clarecameron11@gmail.com

15hh ISH mare

Height: 15hh
Age: 6 years
Price: £9,500
Description: Talented mare done a bit of everything dressage, SJ, XC, showing and workers hacks alone or in company. Competitive, knowledgeable home only.
07838807809
stephaniefarren2014@gmail.com

13hh connemara pony

Height: 13hh
Age: 8 years
Price: £2,500
Description: Super friendly pony, regularly caught and handled by kids. Good to catch, groom, shoe, bath and tack up. Would be best suited to a competent kid.
07900155313
els_jos@hotmail.com

Welsh B

Height: 13.2hh
Age: 9 years
Price: £3,750
Description: 9 years 13.2. Took supreme ridden pony hes very quick against the clock in his showjumping. Really hard sale due to being outgrown.
07496183286
kirsty.heenan90@gmail.com

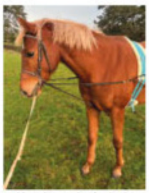
15.2hh, 13yr, TB

Height: 15.2hh
Age: 13 years
Price: £600 ono
Description: 15.2 hh, 13yr old, TB, bay mare. Qualifies for ROR. Selling her from field. Wormed, vacc, Weatherbys Passport, she is for sale only.
07446049470
jayhaywardbrickwork@yahoo.com

Top Class LW Cob

Height: 14.3hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £5,500
Description: Top Class Lightweight show quality cob mare. 2019 14.3hh and growing 8.5" bone. Full history known, just recently backed and riding away quietly.
07759654866
Danimariepoole@outlook.com

Jelly Tot



Height: 14.2hh
Age: 5 years
Price: £6,000
Description:
Jelly Tot will be ridden by anyone. Unfortunately I work in racing and don't have the time to bring her on even more.
07702394302
cameronisinthehouse@gmail.com

Flashy Section D

Height: 14hh
Age: 10 years
Price: £4,250
Description:
14hh, 10 year old, registered section D mare. Lottie has been an absolute sweetheart.
07377266171
info@argentoequestrian.co.uk

Flashy Connemara

Height: 15hh
Age: 11 years
Price: £8,650
Description: Benny 11yo Dun (Buckskin) Connemara Gelding, Super safe, Full Wardrobe. Contact for more info.
07964495575
jennifer-ross@hotmail.com

Clover

Height: 15hh
Age: 7 years
Price: £11,950
Location: Ireland
Description:
Extremely well bred Sport Horse! Clover is a 7 year old Irish Sport horse mare, standing 15hh. She is a super mare with huge potential and scope!
00353868077626
gertytynan@gmail.com

Max

Height: 14hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £6,950
Location: Ireland
Description:
Easy and quiet, gentle pony! Max is a 4 year old, purebred Connemara gelding he is standing 14hh at the moment with more to grow.
00353868077626
gertytynan@gmail.com

Raymond - Allrounder!

Height: 14.1hh
Age: 6 years
Price: £9,950
Location: Ireland
Description: Brilliant all-round pony! Raymond is a 6 year old purebred Connemara gelding, standing 14.1hh. He is a lovely pony with so much potential and ability.
00353868077626
gertytynan@gmail.com

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Dartmoor Pony

Height: 11hh
Age: 2 years
Price: £400
Description: 2 year Dartmoor pony from 2021 drift to make 11.2hh. Will make great lead rein first pony and in-hand show pony. Knowledgeable home required.
079460986120
pip.watkins@mac.com

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Connemara cross

Height: 15hh **Age:** 7 months
Price: £3,750
Location: Newmarket, Suffolk
Description: Outstanding yearling by Kilour Star registered dun filly show quality born June 2nd 2022 to make 15 hands excellent straight movement lovely personality well handled home bred. Location West Suffolk.
07876516784 / 01440823734
Jfm.clinton@gmail.com

Broodmares

SJ Broodmare

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 8 years
Price: POA
Location: Devon
Description: 16.2 bay mare with exceptional breeding by GC tour champion Talubet Z on a Contender mare. Her first foal was a county level Champion sports horse.
017814440977
sophiahendy@icloud.com

Dartmoor colt

Height: 11hh
Age: 9 months
Price: £500
Description:
Registered Dartmoor colt born April 2022. Lovely boy by Dural Titus Andronicus out of Sherberton Obi. Could go far.
07961 852989
edgehillcottage@hotmail.com

Chaps mare

Height: 16.3hh
Age: 2 years
Price: £4,500
Description: Rising 2yo Warmblood x cob mare, very easy on the ground. Up to date with everything, currently stabled but can live out happily, good doer.
+447944957331
Stephenjeshmade@outlook.com

Youngstock

Reg. Suffolk Colt

Height: 13hh
Age: 6 months
Price: £4,500
Location: Clayhanger, Devon
Description: Beautiful registered Suffolk colt born 6th July 2022. Ernie could go far in the right hands and be a lovely stallion prospect for this rare breed.
07961 852989
edgehillcottage@hotmail.com

Anglo Arab colt

Height: 15.2hh
Age: 7 months
Price: £3,000
Location: Minehead
Description: Anglo Arab chestnut colt by H Tobago Lovely foal who should makea show hack or competition horse He is 7 months old. Please contact by phone.
07950918596
Timmerrington@gmail.com

Arabian colt foal

Height: 15hh
Age: 7 months
Price: £3,000
Location: Minehead
Description: Possibly the last purebred colt by H Tobago Chestnut to go grey colt who is lovely natured and moves beautifully.
07950918596
Timmerrington@gmail.com

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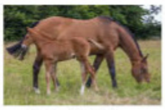
Horses for loan

SJ broodmare



Height: 16.2hh
Age: 8 years
Price: Loan
Location: Totnes
Description:
Exceptional pink papered 8yo KWPN mare for lease by Talubet Z on a Contender mare. Bred 2 top foals without complications.
07814440977
sophiahendy@icloud.com

Part loan

Height: 11.1hh
Age: 2 years
Price: POA
Description: He is a Dartmoor x he is 2 looking part loan once twice a week to groom and do basic ground work non ridden as age get to about 12hh.
07778588841
gemmahoughton1@gmail.com

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Horseboxes & Vehicles

Beautiful Coach-Built PRB 7.5-Tonne Horsebox

Price: POA **Location:** Uckfield, East Sussex
Description: Coach-built in 2021 by PRB Horseboxes. Stalled for 2 horses/3 ponies. Sleeps 4. IVECO Eurocargo 75E 2015 Chassis. MOT until April 2023. Full service history. Automatic gearbox. Excellent condition inside and out. Full leather luxurious living and 3 leather seats in cab. **01825831931**
sales@equinequality.com

SOLD - Fabulous 18-tonne Scania - MORE WANTED 3.5 - 26 tonne

SOLD
More wanted...

Price: €50,000 **Location:** East Sussex
Description: This lovely Scania 18 tonne horsebox advertised 7 days ago is now sold, but we have customers waiting for 3.5 tonne to 26 tonne lorries. Let us know if you are looking to sell (or buy) and we would be happy to help!
00 44 1825 831 931
sales@equinequality.com

Custom-built 12 tonne DAFs to meet your specification

Price: POA
Location: Uckfield, East Sussex
Description: 12 tonne DAF, In Build 4 Stall / 6 Berth, Automatic, Euro 6, Low Mileage, 3 seats in cab. Customised to suit your exact needs.
07778 616990
sales@equinequality.com

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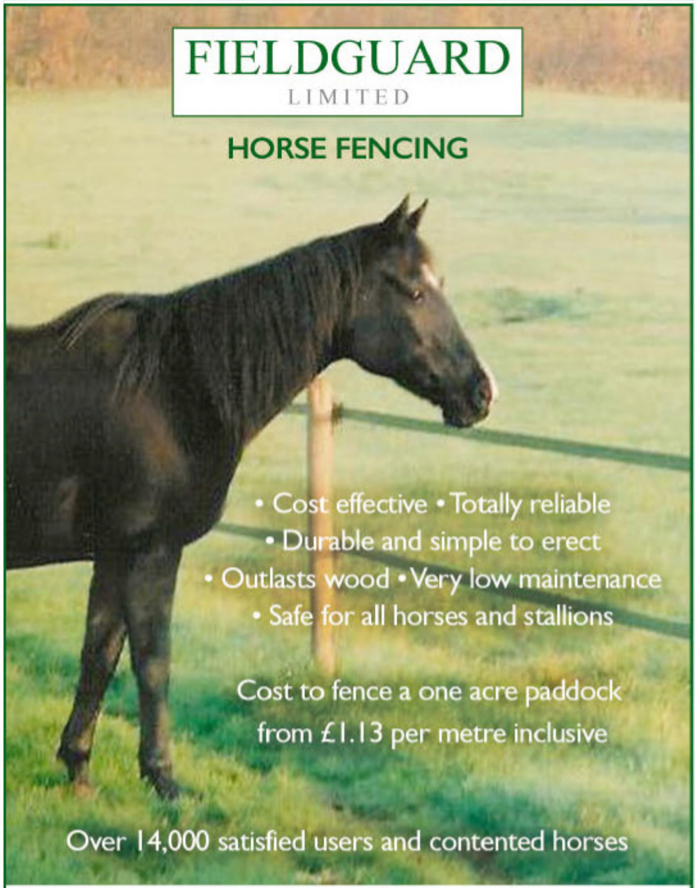

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‘Like a granny at a rave’

Persuaded by one of her friends to join in the merriment of a girls’ day out with ladies tanned and made up to the nines, *Tessa Waugh* delights in this “different side to hunting”

FOR several years now, I’ve been meaning to go to the Tynedale’s ladies’ day. However, I’ve always managed to baulk at the very last minute.

“Isn’t it just a lot of drinking, jumping and chatting?” I said to a friend who had booked in early.

“Absolutely,” she replied, looking confused.

What could be better? But the day probably would have slipped by again if it weren’t for the galvanising effects of my friend Emma who lives up the road. We arranged to travel down together and meet some others there. Some more thrusty members of the College Valley were going too, so it was all set.

THE day takes place on an estate belonging to one of the Tynedale masters and the meet alone was a sight to behold, with 102 ladies on horseback forming a sea of navy coats in front of an imposing country house. It was a younger crowd than I’d expected, some primped for Instagram with headcams, chestnut tans and super-long lashes.

> *“It was a younger crowd, some primped for Instagram with headcams, chestnut tans and long lashes”*

“This is a different side to hunting,” I thought, eyes on stalks like a granny at a rave.

The formidable machine of the Tynedale purrs into life for this big fundraiser. Everyone was there to hand out drinks, stand at gates, guide trailers into fields and pull them out at the other end (thank you to the two men with the tractor). Coco, Emma, Mo and I had only just arrived at the meet when joint-master and huntsman Charlie swept out with the hounds. He was closely followed by our host and Jack Thomas Watson, who was to be field master for the day.

Jack cuts a dash across country and he’s friendly and fun, but I couldn’t help wondering how he would cope with 102 women sky-high on alcohol and adrenaline. The answer was brilliantly, and when he asked for quiet, he jolly well got it. I’m not too sure what was going on at the sharp end because for the first hour or two we were too busy jumping ourselves silly. In a lull I whispered to Lois, partner of Adam’s kennel-huntsman Jake, “Where are the hounds?”

“Not a clue,” she replied smiling, but I think I was missing the point of this fun and social day.

At second horses, we broke for amaretto coffees and chocolates. More chat.

“I’m desperate for a pee,” said a smiley lady from the North Tyne by way of introduction.

There were still plenty out when we watched the handsome Tynedale hounds hunting away and hacked home in the dark with the tea tent glowing in the distance. I was full of love for my horse, who had looked after me all day. There was something incredibly refreshing about taking on this very different day. Apparently, the Berwickshire are doing one at the end of the month. **H&H**

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